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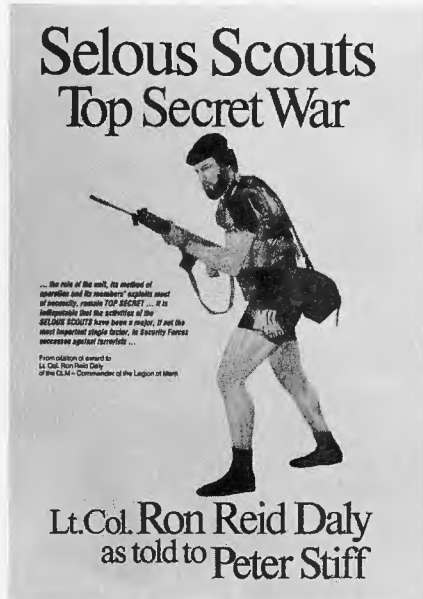
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NEW!

NOW!

SELOUS SCOUTS TOP SECRET WAR



Another *Soldier of Fortune* exclusive coup! In August 1981, Robert K. Brown flew to the Transkei where he was the first journalist ever to interview Ron Reid Daly, former commanding officer of the Selous Scouts and presently a major general commanding the Defense Force of Transkei. Concurrently, he obtained exclusive North American distribution rights for the book, **Selous Scouts Top Secret War**.

For the first time, the complete, inside story of the Rhodesian super-secret Selous Scouts has been told by their tough-as-teak CO. The Selous Scouts, utilizing "psuedo-gang concept" warfare rampaged through terrorist infiltrated territory, seeking out, tracking down and killing terrs. The Scouts also participated in some of the most daring and successful cross-border operations recorded in the annals of military history. They were credited with 68 percent of all terr KIAs!

Probably the most bloody yet successful cross-border op was the Selous strike against a terr camp located at Pungwe,

Mozambique. An air-photo reconnaissance mission over Mozambique alerted Rhodesia's high command to a buildup of terrorists at Pungwe. Then 72 Selous Scouts infiltrated Mozambique in captured, camouflaged terr vehicles, raced to Pungwe base, fooled the terrs into thinking they were a resupply convoy and then opened fire. The final body count: 1,026 terrs dead, thousands wounded. No Scouts were killed, and only five wounded.

As Reid Daly describes it in his book:

"The parade ground suddenly opened up in front of them (the Scouts). There were few men in the column who did not gasp in amazement at the sight that greeted them — thousands of terrorists on parade.

"There could never have been enough rehearsals, briefings and mental preparation to have readied them for the sight which met their eyes."

Reid Daley quotes one Scout: "I just hope we don't run out of ammunition!"

More than 4,000 unsuspecting ZANLA soldiers milled around the vehicles — "... at least one thing was crystal clear . . . no one suspected they were Selous Scouts.

"Then one terrorist looked into a soldier's clearly European eyes and raised the alarm. The effect was indescribable.

"Two 20mm cannons, a .50 caliber Browning HMG, three .30 cal. Browning machine guns, one 12.7 Russian HMG and three twin 7.62 FN MAGs plus the individual infantry weapons carried by the Scouts opened up, all at the same time.

"Hundreds of terrorists fell to the ground with the first onslaught of bullets, as though a gale force wind had blown them off their feet . . . A sustained rate of fire was maintained until all movement on the parade ground had ceased. The crew of one armored car is credited with having killed 150 terrs."

NOW AVAILABLE, 424 page, 208,000-word combat classic contains 15 color photos, 89 black and white photos, 17 maps and diagrams. It also describes the activities of the most famous American merc to serve with the Rhodesians, Maj. Jack Murphy.

Every serious student or practioner of unconventional and guerrilla warfare needs this book in his library!

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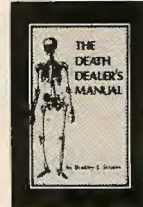
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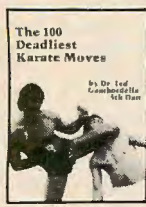


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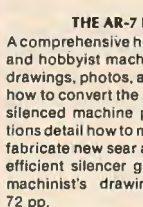
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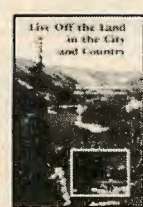
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EDITOR'S NOTE

SOF SPECIAL ISSUE

IF you are one of the 150,000 *Soldier of Fortune* readers who buy their copies on the newsstand each month, don't let the \$3.50 cover price on December's issue scare you.

December's SOF will be a Special Issue. Special because it's going to be a 132-page book and special because those extra 32 pages will enable us to give you a story lineup from the world's hot spots we think you'll enjoy reading as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

From Lebanon we've got first-hand, on-the-scene reports and photos from Jim Morris and Rick Venable.

From Afghanistan we've got more exciting action photos from a trip into the interior by SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown and Jim Coyne.

Executive Editor Bob Poos and contributor Jim Shortt of England have put together an interesting account of one of the world's most elite fighting units — the Royal Marines Special Boat Squadron — complete with what is known of their activities in the Falkland Islands.

Contributor Dr. J.H. Williams chipped in the most complete account we've ever seen on Augustino Sandino, the famous Nicaraguan rebel leader, whom the Sandinistas appropriated as their "patron" during the revolt against Somoza.

Associate Editor John Metzger contributed an informative account of how to find yourself a job in one of the "hottest" fields around — oil-field roughnecking.

Military Small Arms Editor Pete Kokalis interrupted his pursuit of the perfect "pop-gun" and went to Fort Irwin, California for a stint with some of the big bangers.

We've also got an outstanding analysis of press coverage in Vietnam by highly respected journalist Robert Elegant.

From my viewpoint as Managing Editor, there's only one problem with December's issue — January I have to go back to turning out at 100-page magazine at \$3.00 a copy. Don't miss SOF's first special, it's a bargain.

—Jim Graves

WAR BULLETIN — AFGHANISTAN

AS this issue went to press we received word of a stunning major victory for the Afghan guerrilla forces in Paktia Province, Afghanistan. The Mujahideen freedom fighters whom SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and I accompanied into Afghanistan (see "SOF Inside Afghanistan" on p. 46) successfully destroyed the last two Afghan Army/Soviet forts of Kopkia and Debgai in Paktia Province, and have moved their joint forces forward for an assault on the strategic city of Khost.

The guerrilla attacks on Kopkia and Debgai prompted the Soviets to send three large relief columns of armor and mechanized infantry south from Kabul in an effort to lift the siege on the forts; all three columns were engaged and destroyed in a large-scale action which took place 29-30 June 1982. In the battle, the Mujahideen destroyed 149 trucks, four T-62 tanks and a number of armored personnel carriers; they captured two tanks and a BMP armored personnel carrier intact.

Once the besieged Afghan Army troops had realized there would be no reinforcement or resupply, the forts of Debgai and Kopkia surrendered with all hands and turned over all their weapons and ammunition to the Mujahideen guerrillas — 250 AKMs from the fort of Kopkia alone. Many of the former Afghan Army troops have now joined with the victorious Mujahideen for the march on Khost, swelling their ranks considerably for the upcoming campaigns.

The Soviets, stunned by the ferocity and rapidity of the collapse, ordered the former forts destroyed by aerial bombardment in an effort to deny the guerrillas radio equipment, munitions and heavy mortars remaining in the forts. The Russians succeeded in destroying two heavy mortars before, once again, they were repulsed.

Afghan Army survivors from Kopkia (the fort Brown and I saw attacked) reported that the attacks of 19-20 May (the dates we were there) resulted in the destruction of one 82mm mortar and the officers' quarters. One Afghan Army officer was killed, and a mortarman seriously wounded.

The Afghan freedom fighters are now in position to consolidate most of Paktia Province as a liberated area, and plans have been discussed for the establishment of a government-in-exile there, inside Afghanistan.

Politically and militarily, we are happy to report, the Soviets and their puppet communist government in Kabul control less now than they did one year ago.

—Jim Coyne

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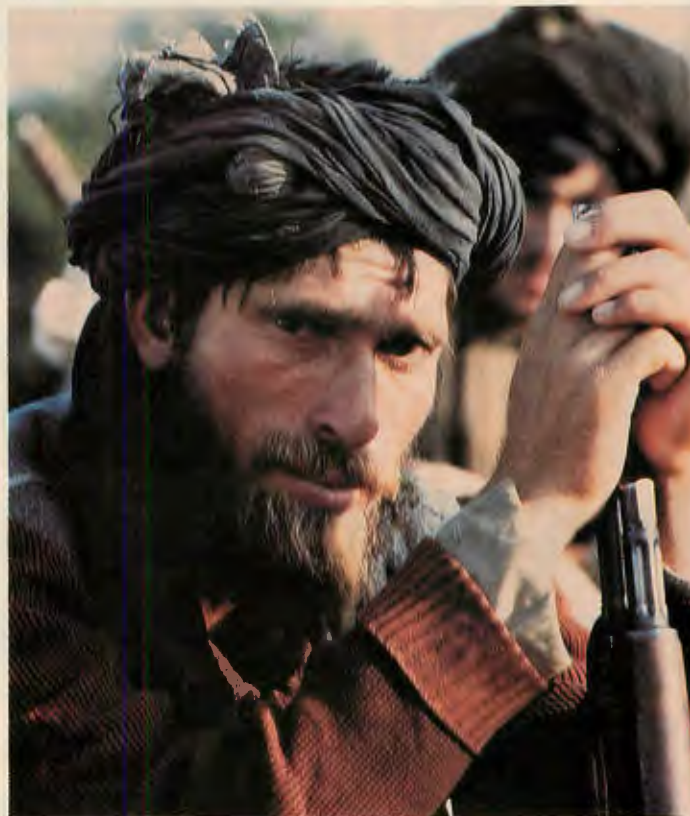
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COVER: Arabian dromedary, American soldier of fortune and Soviet AKMS help Afghans win freedom. Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown – with turban, sunglasses and dyed moustache – brandishes captured Russian assault rifle from back of camel at guerrilla forward base inside Afghanistan after filming siege of Russian outpost. See the fight on page 46. Photo: Jim Coyne

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V VME VICTIM ...

Sirs:

Thought I'd include this little "information kit" for your amusement. The first sheet is a letter sent to President Reagan, my elected officials and the Vietnam Veteran Memorial Fund protesting the design chosen to "honor" my buddies. As you can see from the rest of the "kit" — the literature they fired back at me — the people who protested the war in the first place are now considered to be farsighted visionaries beyond reproach. Never mind that most of them sat on their asses while others fought and died.

Now, because I don't think this memorial is good enough, suddenly I'm a detractor, narrow-minded, unpatriotic ... all this after they suckered me out of 50 hard earned bucks. Just thought you would appreciate some of their literature.

I also had to tell you "thanks" for your magazine. It wasn't till I read your magazine that I quit feeling like a fourth-class citizen and started feeling god-damned good about myself. Your out-scooping the CIA in Afghanistan and the Far East needs no further comment. Hearing Russia and the Third World piss and moan about your publication causes me no end of delight.

Keep up the good work, and may God bless you.

John F. Smith



FLAK

PASS THE PLATE FOR AFFE ...

Sirs:

We at Christian Liberty Academy want to help the Afghans win freedom. As Christians we have a responsibility to maintain freedom in the world.

We know that if the atheistic Russians get their way, not one Afghan will become a Christian. We also know that sometimes it takes bullets in addition to prayers and Bibles to win that freedom.

Please accept this donation in the name of Christ, our Savior, Whom we serve.

The Fifth and Sixth Grades
Christian Liberty Academy
Brookfield, Wisconsin

This note accompanied a \$50 donation to the Afghan Freedom Fighters Fund.

— The Eds.

TWENTY-TWENTY VISION ...

Sirs:

I read Dave Danylyshyn's candidly written article on binoculars (June '82) with great interest.

SOF has done most of us in the business a favor by having the article written by a man who was not paid to do so by a manufacturer. I hope he will write another more technical article discussing stereoscopy and lens coatings.

Marshal Sandler
Northwest Telescope and
Binocular Shop
Portland, Oregon

NRA ENDORSEMENT ...

Sirs:

Let me thank you most sincerely for the endorsement you gave me, as a candidate for the NRA Board of Directors, in your March issue.

Though I do not know all of the candidates you endorsed, I do know a good many of them and I certainly agree that they are good choices for the NRA Board. I hope we are all successful.

I look forward to meeting you in person, perhaps at the NRA Convention, and in the meantime if there is ever anything I can do for you please be sure to let me know.

Cordially,
Jim Carmichel
Shooting Editor
Outdoor Life

F^N FOUL-UP ...

Sirs:

In "Ordnance Expo '82" (August, '82) you call the rifle at the top of the page an FN LAR. It is not.

It is the new FN bid for a caliber .223/5.56mm individual infantry weapon, known as the FNC carbine. Having just purchased a copy for \$995, I can say that it is a fine rifle which incorporates the battle-proven Kalashnikov system (cam locking bolt, gas piston overhead, exhaust bleed holes) with the sights and magazines of an M16. The rifle also incorporates the new 1-in-7-inch-twist barrel necessary for

Continued on page 89

NEW
NEW
NEW
NEW



EXPLORER SII

Charter's Explorer SII is a fun-to-shoot pistol with a style all its own. This clip-fed .22 LR semi-automatic has a NEW anti-corrosion finish that makes it even easier to care for.

A perfect "first gun" for target shooting, plinking, or varmints, the Explorer SII is simple to operate yet surprisingly accurate. Just insert the 8-round magazine, cock and fire. Great to take along backpacking or camping—just by removing the barrel, it travels compact, safe, and light—a mere 20 ounces!

Optional barrels and other accessories are available for the Explorer SII. Write Charter Arms for more details and information on our entire line of fine American firearms... a dependable product at an affordable price. Send \$2.00 and get the Charter jacket insignia.



CHARTER ARMS

Dept. 2L-SFN, 430 Sniffens La., Stratford, CT 06497



Black Commando Dog Tag Set

(A Kaufman's Exclusive): 2 GI stainless steel tags, specially treated to be non glare flat black plus 2 black (4" and 24") ball chains \$5.00/set

Regulation GI Dog Tags

set of 2 stainless steel tags and 2 stainless chains (4" and 24") \$3.00/each
Want us to print them? WE'LL PRINT ANYTHING up to 6 lines and 16 spaces per line.

Printing only \$1.00 per tag (\$2.00 per set)
Please, no Dog Tag imprinting orders by telephone.

Military Elite Distinctive Dog Tags



We've taken the official distinctive insignia of elite professional troops and affixed them to a genuine GI tag. Sold with 4" stainless chain...perfect for use as a keychain or worn with your dog tag set.

Choose the elite dog tag of: Special Forces; Airborne/Rangers; Paratroopers; USMC Recon; USMC Globe & Anchor; 101st Airborne; or 82nd Airborne \$5.00/each

Dog Tag Silencers

black, non-glare rubber bumpers for tags \$1.00/pair

Special Forces Green Beret

Jaunty and daring and classy — like the professionals who wear them. These are official regulation berets of 100% vat dyed wool and meeting all military specs. Made expressly for us by the prime government contractor. Also available:

- Airborne Qualified (Maroon)
- Ranger Commandos (Black)
- Artillery & Guardian Angels (Red)
- Commando Dress (Camouflage)

Official headgear for: **Special Forces**
Sizes—6 7/8 to 7 1/4
(Not sure of head size? Tell us how many inches around your head where you wear your hat. We'll send the right one.) \$13.00/each

Drill Instructor/Smoke the Bear Hat

Formally called the Campaign Hat, this is a really fine quality pressed felt headpiece. A hat with character. No one who wears it escapes a personality change. An uncontrollable urge to shout orders or heap abuses, pursue flammers or write traffic tickets. Let your true or wistful self be heard. Sizes: 6-7/8 to 7 5/8 \$19.75/each

Genuine Leather Chin Strap

\$2.00/each

Acorn Hat Cord (as shown)

\$6.00/each
(Specify color: silver, gold metallic, black/gold, metallic, yellow, red or light blue)

Watch Cap, 100% Wool

This is the genuine GI, tightly knit, and all-wool watch cap. Used by commandos and troops alike, this tightly knit cap fits snug on any size head for maximum warmth on extended cold weather operations. Sides can roll down to protect ears. Choose between dark blue/black (Navy Seal or Marine Recon teams) or OD (olive drab; army) \$6.25/each

Jungle Fatigues



Pants feature: 6 pockets (thigh pockets are belloved); drawstring cuffs; adjustable waist tab. Jackets feature: 4 pockets, bellows style. Tell us your chest, height, and waist measurements when ordering. Choose from:

- Camouflage, Woodland Pattern -50% cotton/50% nylon. Army's latest issue; the pants have a reinforced seat and knees; the jacket has reinforced elbows. Brand New.

Specify: Jacket or Pants \$34.00/each; \$65.00/set

Camouflage, Day Desert Pattern -50% cotton/50% nylon. Latest issue to Airborne Troops of the Rapid Deployment Force. Brand New.

Specify: Jacket or Pants \$34.00/each; \$65.00/set

Olive Drab (OD) Green -100% cotton, ripstop; as used in early Vietnam. Current GI manufacture, Brand New.

Specify: Jacket or Pants \$29.75/each; \$57.00/set

Camouflage, Woodland Pattern Commercial Manufacture -we've used the genuine military Woodland Camo cloth and fashioned these like the GI Fatigues. We cut some corners to trim the price, but these American made fatigues look just like the genuine ones. Brand New.

Specify: Jacket or Pants \$26.00/each; \$49.00/set

Elite Commando T-Shirts



2 color silkscreen (never a rubbery iron-on) on finest quality shirts you'll be proud of. Another Kaufman's Exclusive:

- Special Forces—grey shirt, (50% cotton/50% polyester) black and white design.
- Airborne/Ranger—black shirt (100% cotton) red and white design.
- Marine Recon—red shirt (100% cotton) gold and white design.

Specify size (S,M,L,XL) \$7.95/each

Send for Free Sportswear Brochure With All Our New Designs

Ranger Combat Cap-Woodland Camouflage

- latest Army issue. This winterweight cap features lined flaps which can fold out to keep your ears warm and tuck into the hat when the weather's bad. Sizes: 7, 7 1/4, 7 1/2, 7 3/4 \$8.75/each

GEARING UP



M-65 Field Jackets

This is the basic issue combat jacket. Designed for complete utility, these water repellent and wind-proof jackets feature: 4 super large utility pockets; gusseted back for complete mobility and freedom of movement; epaulets; adjustable cuffs and collar; drawstring waistband; hidden hood in collar. Brand new, of course. Sizes are XS, S, M, L, XL. Some long lengths are available in some styles. If you're unsure of your size, tell us your chest measurement when ordering.

XS-L \$55.00/each; XL & all long lengths \$60.50/each

Choose from:

- Olive Drab (OD) Green
- Camouflage, Leaf Pattern
- Camouflage, Woodland Pattern (latest GI issue to Army).
- Camouflage, Day Desert Pattern (latest issue to Rapid Deployment Force).
- Desert Tan - (NATO issue).
- Camouflage, Tiger Stripe - (Commercially made in a US mill to military specs).

M-65 liner - these were designed to quickly and easily button into the M-65 Jacket to provide complete warmth by sealing in the body heat. Brand New. XS, S, M, L, Genuine Government Issue \$19.00/each; XL \$20.50/each

Camouflage Cloth, Woodland Pattern

This genuine military cloth is from a government contract and is the same material currently in use for the camo battle dress fatigues. Twill design of 50% cotton/50% nylon. Price per yard (60" wide)

First 3 yards \$7.00/yard
Each additional yard \$6.00/yard

Shipping Costs

Please include appropriate shipping costs from chart below with each order. Amounts shown include costs of postage, packaging, insurance and handling.

Orders up to \$10.00	\$1.75
Orders from \$10.01 to 15.00	2.25
Orders from \$15.01 to 20.00	2.75
Orders from \$20.01 to 30.00	3.25
Orders from \$30.01 to 40.00	3.75
Orders from \$40.01 to 50.00	4.50
Orders from \$50.01 to 70.00	5.75
Orders over \$70.00	6.75

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Genuine Military Insignia - (meeting all military specs)



- Special Forces Flasher (choose from: 5th Group in Vietnam: 8th; 12th; or JFK Special Warfare Center) \$1.75/each
 - Special Forces Shoulder Patch (specify regular or subdued) \$1.75/each
 - Special Forces Crest \$3.00/each
 - Paratrooper Badge \$4.00/each
 - Air Assault Badge \$4.00/each
 - 101st Airborne Crest \$3.00/each
 - 82nd Airborne Crest \$3.00/each
 - 101st Airborne Patch (specify regular or subdued) \$1.75/each
 - 82nd Airborne Patch (specify regular or subdued) \$1.75/each
 - Ranger or Airborne Tabs (specify regular or subdued) \$1.00/each
 - Marine Recon Wing - gold plated \$4.50/each
 - Pilot Wing, USAF - nickel plated \$3.50/each
 - Full Bird Colonel's Rank - Army - nickel plated \$3.50/pair
 - General's Rank-One Star-Army - nickel plated \$3.50/pair
 - Navy Seal Badge - gold plated \$10.50/each
 - U.S. Flag (2 x 3 1/4) \$2.25/each
- For a complete listing of over 1,000 military insignia items send for our Insignia Collection Catalog. Cost \$2.00 plus 88c for 1st class postage.

All Orders Shipped Within 24 Hours

US Navy Cold Weather Deck Jackets

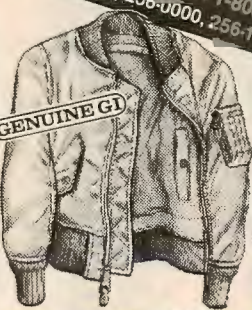


Type A2 - These jackets feature windproof cuff and hip closures plus a full zipper front with button overclosure. The Olive Drab (OD) green shell is 50% cotton/50% nylon. This blend allows the jacket to be water-repellent (not waterproof) while at the same time it has the softness of the natural fibre. It is lined with double face pile in both the body and sleeves. It sports two hip pockets and a breast pocket with snap closure. The Deck Jacket is cut slightly below the waist so large or tall persons will find it quite comfortable. XS,S,M,L \$47.75/each; XL \$50.75/each; XXL \$55.75/each.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Angle Head Flashlight

This is the heavy duty olive drab plastic flashlight issued to basic and stealth units. The flashlight is waterproof, non-glare and features 4 different lenses which can be easily installed or removed. It can clip onto the belt or suspender for hands free operation; operates on 2 standard D cell batteries and comes complete with a spare bulb. Brand new, sold in the GI box \$6.50/each; 2 for \$12.25



USAF Flight Jacket

These flight jackets are issued to military fliers and are designated Type MA1 for intermediate Cold. (This means that it is the medium weight jacket, designed for comfort in a temperature zone of about 20° to 55°F). Look for the military designation, sizes and stock numbers inside the left pocket. The outer shell and lining are 100% nylon making the jacket completely wind and waterproof. The interlining is 100% polyester fiberfill for the highest degree of warmth per ounce. This jacket is reversible; outside in your choice of either sage green or blue and the inside is survival orange. It features: two hip pockets outside as well as inside, sewn pen and pencil holders plus zippered easy access storage pocket in the left sleeve. This a snappy, convenient, warm, fully functional jacket and it happens to be the latest fashion trend.

Specify: Sage Green or Blue Shell - Regular Length Only. Sizes: XS,S,M,L \$46.75/each; XL \$51.50/each

Brand New!! Flight Jackets in Black and Woodland Camouflage

- Exact in every detail to the genuine GI MA1 jackets above, manufactured by the same government contractor, to military specs; with reversible orange linings. The Black nylon shelled jackets feature a gold zipper and the Woodland Camo jackets are made from genuine GI cloth of 50% cotton/50% nylon. Sizes: XS, S, M, L, \$48.75/each; XL \$53.50/each;

USAF Heavyweight Flight Jacket-Type M2B

This is the warmest flight jacket that the military issues. It features full pile hood which drapes over the shoulders when not needed. This is the cold weather version of the Intermediate Weight Flight Jacket - Type MA1 featured elsewhere in this ad. This jacket is designed for subfreezing temperatures. Waterproof and Windproof. S,M,L \$87.75/each; XL \$95.75

Camouflage Collection Catalog

featuring genuine military clothing and personal equipment \$1.00/each. Free with any order.

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For over 65 years the Kaufman name has been respected for offering the finest in genuine military goods and insignia. Our commitment to first rate service is legendary. Our service policy means:

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No, we're not the cheapest. But you get what you pay for. If you order the cheapest you may wait a long time for delivery of something you may ultimately be unhappy with. If you order from Kaufman's you'll see why top quality merchandise and first rate service (with a Customer Service Department always available) will squeeze the most value out of every dollar you spend.

GUNLEATHER is about the last thing a new shooter thinks about, but a good holster is vitally important to the competitor or to the man who carries a gun every day. Holsters vary with the gun, the shooter and the occasion, but IPSC competition defines a good holster by its adaptation to the necessity for security, speed, concealability and an unvarying grip position.

Many competitors use a front cross-draw holster, but this isn't particularly practical for the man who carries a gun from day to day or in his work. Since shoulder holsters don't allow enough speed for competition, the most realistic holster for IPSC is a strong-side hip holster. The shooter has a choice of angle from the FBI handle-forward rake to the muzzle-forward position favored by quick-draw competitors.

In 1975 I wanted a muzzle-forward holster, but didn't want an anachronistic gunslinger's rig, so Milt Sparks from Idaho City, Idaho, built me a muzzle-forward rig. It worked beautifully for competition, and it was something that would work for everyday wear, too.

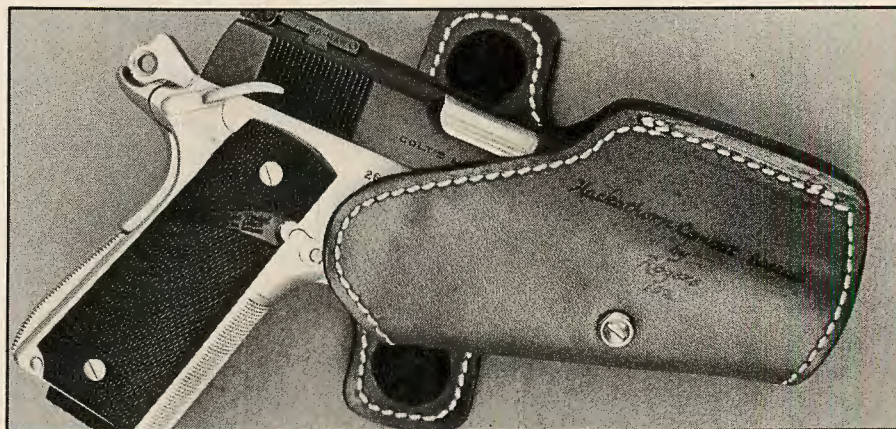
About three years ago Bill Rogers started working with me on a new holster design to be sold by Rogers Holster Co., Dept. SOF, 1736 St. John's Bluff Road, Jacksonville, FL 32216. Rogers is an old hand at holsters, and — as a veteran FBI agent — no rookie at gunplay. For the last three years we have exchanged ideas



COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT

Hackathorn Combat Holster

by Ken Hackathorn



Customized competition Colt snuggles like a snake in a hole in Rogers' new

competition holster: The Hackathorn Combat Special.

**PERFORMANCE
and
RELIABILITY.**

AL MAR KNIVES 8600 S.W. Salish Lane, Wilsonville, Oregon 97070, U.S.A. (503) 682-1608

on construction and technique. The result: Rogers is now manufacturing and marketing the Hackathorn Combat Special, a scabbard built around the ideals of IPSC pistol competition.

The Combat Special is built from two thicknesses of leather sandwiching a molded plastic insert that — unlike steel liners or leather alone — will not stretch or otherwise deform. The Hackathorn Combat Special will keep its shape through years of hard use.

The holster is durable, but it's also fast. A molded sight channel prevents snags with high-profile competition sights, and the pistol barely moves back before the shooter can whip it forward to shoot. The pistol leaves the holster so quickly because the front of the holster is cut in a deep, wide channel along the top of the pistol slide to allow the pistol to pop free with minimal backward movement.

Individual preferences in holster angle are satisfied by an arrangement of Velcro tabs on the flap of the belt-loop that goes inside the belt. When these tabs are mated to the Velcro patches inside the pistol belt, the holster is held firmly at the shooter's best angle.

I have used the prototype for the production run for the last six months. It is just about perfect. The Hackathorn Combat Special has a suggested retail price of \$44.50, and I would have paid more than that for it. ☒

SELF-DEFENSE PRODUCTS



NEW 8-SHOT TEAR GAS REVOLVER

Fires 8-.22 cal. tear gas cartridges or blanks in seconds. You must be over 21.

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- 91006 Tear gas cartridges (10) \$ 2.00
- 91008 Extra-loud blanks (100) \$ 3.00
- 92000 Paralyzer tear gas spray, pocket size \$ 5.95
- 92004 Paralyzer tear gas spray, police size \$ 8.95

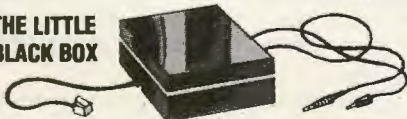
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"Improvvised Munitions Handbook" is the most sought after heretofore impossible to obtain Army manual. Includes revealing chapters on improvvised explosives and propellants, mines and grenades, small arms weapons and ammo, mortars and rockets, incendiary devices, fuses, ignition and delay mechanisms plus how to manufacture rocket launchers pistols, shotguns and recoil-less rifles from easy to obtain materials and much much more. New expanded edition. Limited number available. ORDER NOW.

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THE LITTLE BLACK BOX



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- TR-150 with modular plug-in hook-up \$29.95

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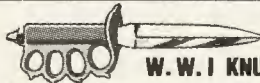


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- 700918 \$19.95

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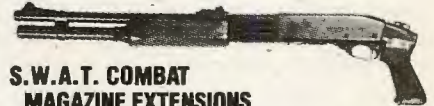


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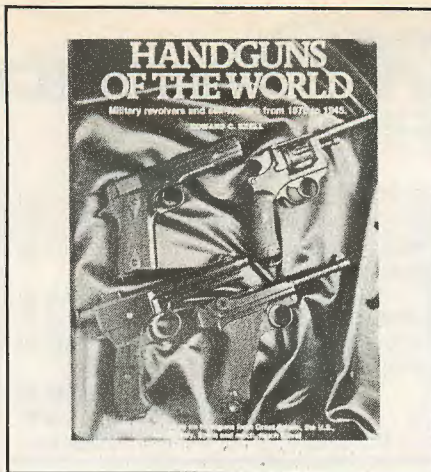
IN REVIEW

HANDGUNS OF THE WORLD, Military Revolvers and Self-loaders from 1870 to 1945. By Edward C. Ezell. Stackpole Books, P.O. Box 1831, Harrisburg, PA 17105. 1981. 704 pp. Illustrated. \$39.95. Review by Peter G. Kokalis.

THIS great book by the highly regarded weapons authority, Dr. Edward C. Ezell, is destined to be a classic, and is a required addition to the bookshelf of every serious student of military small arms. Despite the inclusiveness of its title, Ezell's volume deals almost exclusively with the military handgun.

The book commences with a concise history of the military handgun from 1350 to 1870. The development of military revolvers and self-loading pistols from 1870 to 1900 follows. Included are excellent summaries of the design histories of such well-known revolvers as the Colt, Smith & Wesson, Webley and Nagant. We are also exposed to such oddities as the Schwarzlose M08 blow-forward self-loading pistol in whose forward grip safety we can see the incipience of the squeeze-cocker on the present-day Heckler & Koch P7.

The designs of Hugo Borchardt and Georg Luger as well as the FN Browning auto pistols are detailed in separate



chapters. Military revolvers and self-loaders of American, Austrian, German, French, Italian, British, Soviet, Spanish, Czechoslovakian, Finnish and Japanese origin are also described in exhaustive and separate treatments. In each case the scope is epic in its proportions as we are treated not just to mechanical specifications, but also to the exciting inspirations, personal feuds, politics and intrigues that were so much a part of the dramatic history of modern military handguns.

Over 1,000 photographs and line drawings accompany the text of this magnificent book. In every instance they compliment the excellence of Ezell's writing.

The intriguing chapter on American

military handguns, 1900 to 1945, is deserving of special praise. For the first time in one cohesive source we are treated to the fascinating story of the evolution of the Model 1900 Colt Browning pistol, the caliber question, the pistol and revolver trials, and the final showdown between the Savage self-loader and that most famous of military auto pistols — what eventually became the Colt Model 1911.

It is in this chapter on American handguns, however, that Ezell's minor and only flaw becomes most apparent — his fetish for converting everything into the metric system of weights and measurements. While perhaps a noble concession to the world of science and academe, it somewhat limits the everyday usefulness of his data. In reporting on the Springfield Armory trials of 10 November 1910, we are told: "In the next examination, the velocity at 7.62 meters was measured . . ." Few of us in this country (surely the largest potential marketplace for Ezell's book) think in metric terms or will do so in the foreseeable future. More to the point, the measurements during these trials were originally taken in feet and inches, so why not just say 25 feet?

Ezell, in quoting Col. Vincent Fosberry, Victoria Cross recipient, presents the early case for the .45 ACP in more poignant terms than any set of statistics ever will:

"With the civilized man, who knows to a nicety the locality of his principal organs and something of the effects that the presence of foreign bodies in his interior may be expected to produce, a comparatively slight wound (surgically considered) will often suffice to set him thinking of his spiritual condition or his other personal interests, rather than of the business in which he may be engaged. Thus, a comparatively feeble weapon may often be used against him with good effect. But when we are fighting the Ghasi, the Zulu, or the Arab of the Soudan, the case is very different. Any one of these will make his rush, having his mind fully made up to kill you, or to be killed by you, and one of these two things he will get done without *arriere-pensee* of any kind, and he knows as little about his own inside as a tiger does. As in the case of that beast also, when he makes his attack upon you a personal one, you must be prepared to stop him or die."

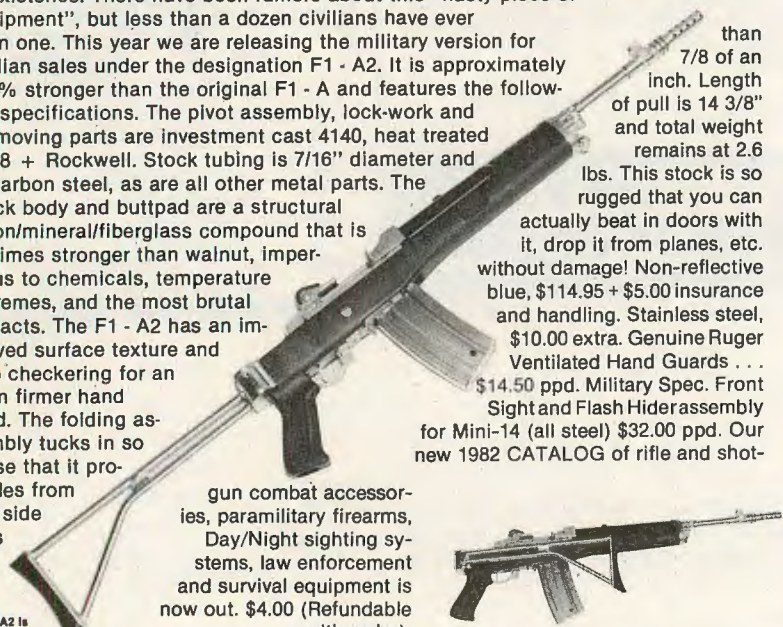
Ezell has just as clearly pointed out the dichotomy of the military handgun. For all the many tales associated with the use of the military pistol, many more tens of thousands have been carried and never used. Yet, as W.W. Greener said, "When one needs a revolver one wants it very badly!"

The chapter on handguns in military conflicts closes with a unique set of photographs illustrating the use of pistols in warfare. Sections on handgun manufacture and cartridges bring this most splendid effort to an end. A five-star rating if there ever was one! ✖

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CLOSE ENCOUNTER IN NO-MAN'S LAND

I Was There

by Michael D. Epstein
as told to M.L. Jones

Michael D. Epstein served with the 82nd Airborne Division Aviation Co. (provisional) from 1957 to 1960. In the spring of 1965 he went through jump school and won his wings with the Israeli Army near Tel Aviv. One Saturday, Epstein's jumpmaster instructor, Sgt. Dori Shaul, asked him if he'd like to go to Jerusalem to see one of the Israeli forward-position observation posts overlooking the Old City. As he tells it:



Sgt. Dori Shaul and Michael Epstein at Israeli Army parachute training center.

IN 1965 there was a no-man's land between the Old City and the New City of Jerusalem. The Arab Legion and the Israeli Army faced each other across this area — sometimes feet apart.

We drove to Jerusalem and walked to a four-story abandoned building jutting into no-man's land. I was told the building was an old French hospital that was claimed by both sides in the 1948 war of

AS of this month SOF will publish only one personal adventure per issue. If you have a submission for "It Happened to Me" or "I Was There," triple-space type it and send it to SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306, Attn: M.L. Jones. All stories should be 500 words or less. Upon publication, SOF will become owner of all publication rights. Submitted articles are subject to editing and revision, although their content and theme will not be changed.

Photos (with captions and credits) are also helpful. Captions should be typed on a separate sheet of paper and keyed to each photograph.

Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope so we can notify you of acceptance or return your story. Article payment is \$50, upon publication. All entrants will receive an SOF patch.

independence and that when the United Nations truce line was established, the building was right on the line. The Arab Legion held one-half of the building and the Haganah (Israeli Army) the other.

The structure had an eerie look about it as we climbed the dark interior stairs to the roof. The passageway was dimly lit and smelled musty from years of no sunlight or fresh air. All the windows were bricked up.

We exited onto the roof into a walled area about seven feet high topped with sandbags all around. Running down the middle of the roof was a higher wall topped with concertina wire. There were six Israeli soldiers under a canvas tarpaulin strung to protect them from the midday sun. One soldier was peering through a periscope binocular mounted on a tripod. He was looking into the Arab Legion-held Old City of Jerusalem.

I was told the Arab Legion held the other half of the building and were on the other side of the high wall observing the Israeli city of New Jerusalem. A concrete-block wall separated each floor and the roof. The Israeli observation post was logging in all military traffic they could see, and keeping an eye on the Arab Legion guards.

I looked through the binocular and as I scanned the Old City I could see the gold dome of the Mosque of Omar. Spaced evenly across the wall were sandbagged Arab Legion positions, some with radio antennae sticking up. I took one more look at the city interior from our height advantage and thanked the Israeli who took up his watch again.

We stayed for about half an hour. I took some pictures, and we started down the dark stairs. As we descended, the sergeant said he had to relieve himself and walked to a dark corner. I told him I would see him downstairs, outside.

I groped my way down the turning stairs from floor to floor until I saw a door and some sunlight coming under it. I opened the door and looked out into a narrow, curving cobblestoned street about 15-feet wide. Across the street was a large building with all the windows bricked up. All up and down the street were concrete flat-topped pyramid structures about three feet high — dragon's teeth anti-tank traps. My guts told me to go back inside but my curiosity got the better of me.

The street curved around a corner about 30 feet from the door. I followed it. As I turned around the corner there was a concrete-block wall barring the street from one building to the other, about 10-feet tall. On top of the wall were three layers of sand bags, and protruding over these was the perforated barrel of a .30-caliber machine gun covering the street. I started to take a photograph about 25 feet from the wall, when up jumped an Arab Legionnaire dressed in a khaki uniform and a traditional red and white checkered kefiyha Arab headdress

Continued on page 88



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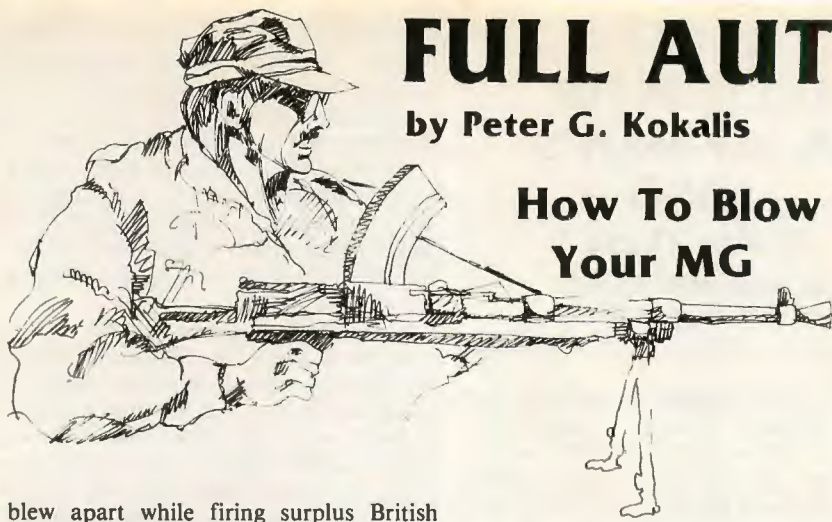
MASTERCARD/AMERICAN EXP./VISA ACCEPT.

NO group of shooters is more penny wise and pound foolish than those who own machine guns. They think nothing of paying \$3,000 to \$4,000 for a new specimen and then proceed to pump the cheapest garbage they can find through it.

Two ammunition pipelines are available to the average civilian machine-gun collector. Military surplus stores have traditionally supplied owners of auto weapons in most foreign calibers such as .303 British, 7.92mm, 6.5mm Dutch, 8mm Lebel, 7.62mm Russian Rimmed and 9mm Parabellum. Reloads have more recently accounted for the modern U.S. military calibers like .30-06, 7.62mm NATO and 5.56mm NATO. Each of these solutions to the rapid-fire ammunition problem presents some sinister labyrinths waiting to wreak havoc and unravel the most expensive collector's piece.

Most of the foreign calibers mentioned are long obsolete, and with each passing year, the supply of surplus ammo both dwindles and ages geometrically. The propellants are disintegrating; the primers are going sour; projectile steel jackets are oxidizing; brass cartridge cases are becoming brittle and steel cases are oxidizing and collapsing from within. In most instances, all of this leads only to an inert round — but occasionally the reverse occurs and a high pressure bomb gets fed into the chamber.

Because machine guns in 7.92mm are so ubiquitous, I have witnessed, or heard of, more weapons self-destructing in this caliber than any other. My own MG 42



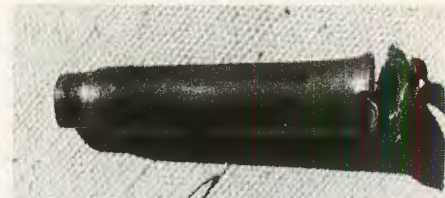
FULL AUTO

by Peter G. Kokalis

How To Blow Up Your MG

blew apart while firing surplus British Besa tank-machine-gun ammo. A jacket separated from its core and remained in the chamber end of the barrel, until the succeeding round tore the receiver apart. Four other MG 42s, two Browning 1919A4s, and a Bren gun, all in 7.92mm, have blown up either in my presence or in that of friends.

Almost all of the MG 42s now in circulation are well-worn, tired guns with mixed parts. The Browning machine guns usually blow the top covers. The Bren gun's receiver was blown out on each side by what very well might have been sabotaged Spanish arsenal reloads from the 1936-39 Civil War. I remember clearly watching the magazine sail a hundred feet into the air at the moment of detonation. We never did find its floor plate.



This eight cent round destroyed \$4,000 Bren gun. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

The fix here is quite simple. Stay away from old, cheap, military-surplus ammunition. In general, use surplus ammo manufactured only after 1960. Even the highly accurate FN-manufactured .303 British ammunition from the early '50s is going bad. While not dangerous (at least yet), neck separations are increasing rapidly. The application of Johnson's Wax on the case is a useful trick which will ease extraction. It remains as an invisible film and will reduce the frequency of case separations on all but the most brittle brass. By waxing .303 British and 7.92mm cases for the last several years, I have diminished neck separations in the Vickers, Bren, MG 42 and MG 34.

The real answer, however, lies in the realm of reloading. The use of relatively fresh components and careful loading techniques will yield many hours of safe shooting through your prize machine gun.

Do not use maximum loads, especially when shooting in hot weather. Each one-degree Fahrenheit increase in powder temperature can increase the chamber pressure by 60 to 100 pounds per square inch. A temperature increase of 30 degrees can raise chamber pressures by 3,000 pounds per square inch, which is more than enough to throw an already maximum load into the danger area. Numerous M16s, Mini 14s and H&K 93s have been blown to bits by individuals who left their maximum-charge reloads out in the broiling sun all afternoon. This is an especially important consideration when reloading GI cases. Military brass is sometimes softer and almost always thicker than commercial brass. This reduces the case capacity, and loads which

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Continued on page 87

Lest We Forget...

VIETNAM TRIBUTE

This is the most spectacular object ever made available to honor the brave Americans who fought for the preservation of freedom in Southeast Asia.



"Ours was, in truth, a noble cause."

Ronald Reagan
President Ronald Reagan

In this, the tenth anniversary year of the last American combat patrol in Vietnam, The American Historical Foundation pays tribute to the Americans who served our country in the struggle for the preservation of freedom in Southeast Asia.

It was a commendable crusade by a powerful nation to help a small, aspiring country win and hold a free and dignified way of life.

History—and time—will judge the Americans who served there to be the heroes of that decade. Some were volunteers, some were draftees. Most had other lives to lead. But when duty called, they served.

They can take pride in their many accomplishments. They did what the leadership of our nation asked them to do, and they did it well.

A Lasting, Tangible Tribute

Now, the largely unsung men and women who served—and, in a sense, the noble motivations and the American spirit that caused us to enter the conflict—are honored through the issuance of this lasting, tangible tribute.

As an appropriate counterpart to the ceremonial swords awarded to American military heroes of the 18th and 19th centuries, a presentation military knife was selected for this 20th century tribute. Each branch of the service will be honored with a separate knife, with inscriptions and embellishments appropriate to that service branch. The first knife—now available—honors the men and women of the United States Army in Vietnam.

Authentic To Vietnam

The Gerber Mark II Combat Knife was selected because it was the most famous knife of this war. This knife first saw use in Vietnam, having been created for combat there. It quickly became the chosen knife of many men of the Green Berets of the U.S. Army Special Forces, and it was privately purchased by men in all branches of the U.S. military.

The original Vietnam-era "wasp body" blade shape—no longer produced—will be reintroduced especially for this series. This blade is hardened, tempered and sharpened by hand to a razor's edge.

But unlike any knife ever made prior to this, this limited edition tribute has been given distinctive embellishments designed with the assistance of U.S. Army combat veterans of Vietnam.

The hilt is produced in the four colors of the Vietnam-era, woodland leaf-pattern camouflage developed by the U.S. Army for jungle fighting. A gold-plated, fired enamel

This is a *genuine* battleworthy Gerber Mark II Combat Knife—not a reproduction or a stylized display piece—authentic to Vietnam and specially embellished for this tribute—the *first* limited edition Gerber combat knife ever made.

cloisone medallion of the U.S. Army insignia forms the focal point of the grip.

The combat scene etched on the mirror-polished steel blade permanently records American troops making an airborne assault on the enemy—a tactical innovation developed in Vietnam.

Riflemen with their M-16s jump from Huey "Slicks," while in the foreground M-60 machine gunners, riflemen and a radioman move out to secure the hot LZ (landing zone under enemy fire). You can almost hear the "whump-whump-whump" of the choppers' blades overhead, the cracking of M-16 fire, the staccato of the M-60's and, in the background, the thud of mortar fire and the enemy's Russian-made AK-47's.

On the blade shoulder is etched the insignia of the U.S. Army—Vietnam, representative of all Army units that served in Southeast Asia. Or, if you prefer, the unit insignia of your choice can be etched in this position.

Booklet by General Westmoreland

As an important reminder to present and future generations of the significant sacrifices made by Americans who served in Southeast Asia, you will also receive a copy of "Vietnam Tribute." This was written by General William Westmoreland, former commander of all U.S. military forces in Vietnam; it is being published by the Foundation as part of this project.

To display and preserve your U.S. Army—Vietnam Tribute Combat Knife, you will receive a specially designed, furniture-finished solid mahogany case of military design, with olive drab Certificate of Authenticity, recessed and fitted into the inner lid.

But only 2,500 of each knife will be made—one to represent each one thousand Americans of the 2,500,000 who served. This limited edition serial number will be engraved on the reverse of each blade, inscribed on the Certificate of Authenticity, and registered with The American Historical Foundation.

First Option, Without Obligation

As an added advantage, you will be guaranteed the opportunity, *without obligation*, to reserve subsequent knives in this series with the same serial number—so you can systematically acquire a complete matched set. These tributes—one to the Marine Corps, one to the Air Force and one to the Navy—will be announced to you privately, one knife at a time, in the months ahead.

You will also be made a member of The American Historical Foundation and receive, at no expense, hard to

obtain information concerning military history and the history, care, display and collecting of knives, swords, and militaria.

Whether or not you or a member of your family served in Vietnam, this tribute will give you a renewed sense of pride in the Americans who answered the call to duty in the defense of freedom in Southeast Asia. Contributions will also be made by the Foundation to Vietnam veterans associations, to help them to continue to perpetuate the memory of the Americans honored by this tribute.

How to Reserve

This is available only through The American Historical Foundation. You may write, call, personally visit or use the reservation form below. Reservations will be acknowledged immediately. Write or call about having your name, service number, dates, etc. etched on the blade reverse. You may send a deposit or payment in full. You may inspect your knife for a full 30 days prior to deciding to keep it. Satisfaction is guaranteed.

Prompt action is suggested to avoid the inevitability of higher prices and the completion of the reservation roster for this strictly limited edition.

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- My deposit of \$39 is enclosed. Please invoice the balance prior to delivery.
 at the rate of \$75 per month, for two months.
 in full.
 I enclose \$189 as payment in full.

(I wish the following unit insignia to be etched on the blade shoulder, in place of the U.S. Army—Vietnam insignia:.....
I am also enclosing \$25 to cover the cost of this special etching request.) Please send information about the Vietnam Tribute for the: U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force.

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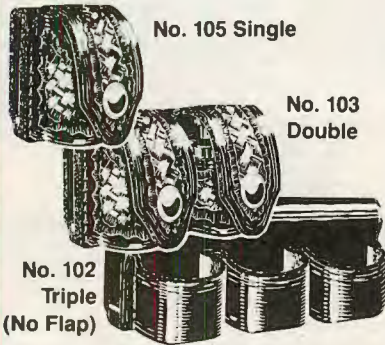
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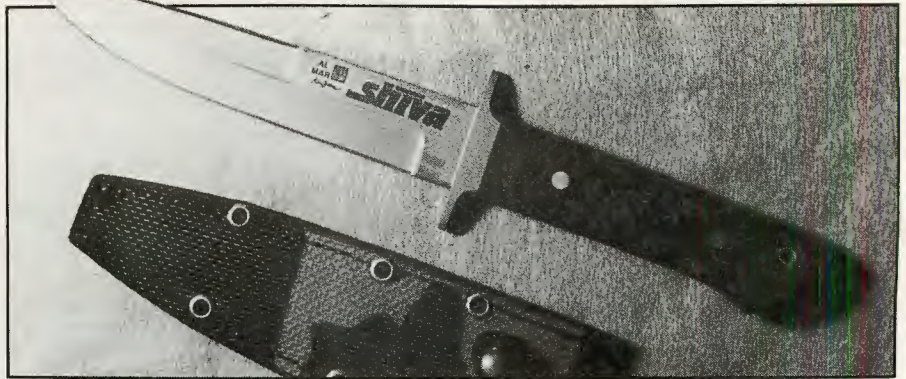
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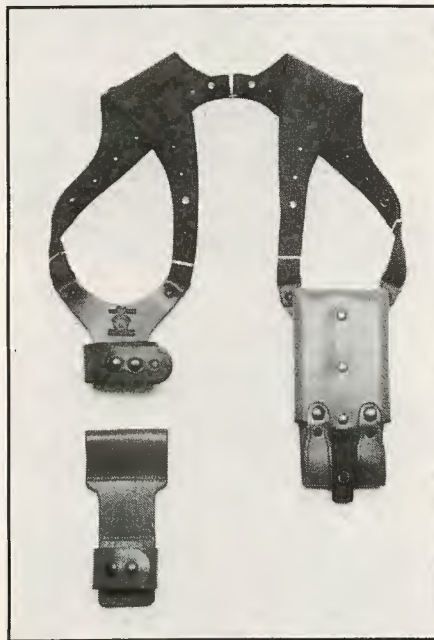
ODA-MAR FIGHTER ...

In SOF's coverage of the 1982 S.H.O.T. (Shooting, Hunting, and Outdoor Trade) Show (see SOF, May '82), we reported on Al Mar and Kuzan Oda's joint effort to produce a specialized fighting knife. The knife was only in its prototype stage then, but now it's available for sale through *Al Mar Knives*, Dept. SOF, 5861 S.W. Benfield Ct., Lake Oswego, OR 97034, phone: (503) 682-1608.

This fighter has been christened the "Shiva" — aptly named after the Indian

God of Destruction. The knife has a seven-inch blade of non-reflective, 154CM stainless-steel, with black micarta handle. The sheath can be belt-carried, but it is specially designed for upside-down carry on web gear. It is constructed of top-grain leather with bonded overlay camouflage cloth in GI leaf pattern. Shown here is SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown's "Shiva" — serial number 007.

Master knifemakers Oda and Mar have produced a quality fighting knife, and for \$225, it's a sound investment.



DE SANTIS SHOULDER RIG ...

Once available only to the U.S. Secret Service and other police agencies, the Uzi-Shoulder Holster is now available for civilian purchase. This rig gives the user the ability to carry an Uzi Carbine with over 80 rounds of 9mm ammunition almost anywhere, undetected.

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The holster is manufactured by the *DeSantis Leather Company* and is distributed by *City Surplus, Inc.* The suggested retail price is \$79.95 plus \$3 shipping and handling. For further information regarding ordering or quantity pricing, contact *City Surplus, Inc.*, Dept. SOF, 292 Fair St., Kingstown, NY 12401. Phone: (914) 338-8096.

CLARIFICATION ...

It has been brought to our attention that the picture of the Lansky Sharpening Kit (see "Cool Tool," SOF, April '82) on page 24 of that issue is actually the deluxe model which retails for

\$43.50, not for \$29.99, as quoted in the photo caption.

We apologize for any inconvenience our readers may have experienced as a result of this error ☹

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SOUTH AFRICAN ARMS CACHES . . .

It is not surprising that after many years of guerrilla war in Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), there are arms dumps hidden all over the country.

Two guerrilla groups (ZIPRA and ZANLA) were moved into assembly areas so quickly after the ceasefire that they were never able (or didn't want to) surrender all their arms. What they did surrender went straight to the former Rhodesian army which was then sole custodian of the armories. A substantial amount of these weapons found their way across the border into South Africa's Transvaal, where they wound up in the hands of exiled followers of Bishop Muzorewa, elected black leader of Rhodesia.

Later, weapons were stolen from the national armory at Cranbourne Barracks, home of the Rhodesian Light Infantry. A few months later Inkomo Barracks, just outside the capital of Zimbabwe, was gutted by fire but not before a large number of weapons was removed. This raises the question of other hidden rightist arms caches, ready for a South African invasion or armed revolt by Muzorewa's followers.

Meanwhile, demobilized guerrillas were supposed to have been paid \$184 a month. In practice this has not happened. At the end of last April there were long lines of ex-guerrillas outside post offices, waiting to collect their January pay.

In some areas disaffected ZIPRA and ZANLA guerrillas have united but in others there is fighting between them. Thus the country's political position remains unstable.

AZADEGAN vs. KHOMEINI . . .

Resistance to the Iranian government of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is now concentrated around the Azadegan (literally Free Men) movement led by former armed forces commander-in-chief, Gen. Bahram Aryana, living in Paris.

Groups around former civilian politician, Dr. Shahpour Bakhtiar, and one-time army chief, Gen. Oveisi, have lost credibility due to their support of Iraq, now at war with Iran.

GURKHAS IN THE FALKLANDS . . .

Great Britain, throughout history one of the most warlike nations in the world, makes no bones about using mercenaries and does not hesitate to do so when the time is right.

The most recent employment of British mercs was during their retaking of the Falkland Islands from Argentina. In this campaign there were

BULLETIN BOARD

by Bob Poos



Afghan lend-lease program: Freedom fighters return borrowed Russian 12.7mm armor-piercing incendiary tracer round with similarly appropriated Degtyarev-Shpagin K-38 HMG fired single shot at disabled Soviet tank 2000m away.

Photo: Robert K. Brown

Gurkhas, tough little fighting men from Nepal who have been in British employ since about 1816. There were about 1,000 of them in the Falklands and they effectively terrorized the poorly trained Argentine conscripts.

Their services are highly valued and their physical prowess is legendary. With his traditional *kukri* knife, a Gurkha can behead an ox or cut a man in two. They are small men — about the size of Japanese — but strong and wiry with a high chest expansion due to their home in Nepal in the Himalaya Mountains.

MERCES IN LEBANON . . .

Maj. Saad Haddad is not turning away volunteers. In a recent interview with the head of the militia in southern Lebanon, SOF special correspondent Jim Morris learned that mercenaries are still employed by the Lebanese and have been fighting with the militia during the Israeli incursion into Lebanon.

If anyone is interested in fighting the PLO for \$98 a month and Israeli left-over C-rats (see "Lebanon on \$3.17 a Day," August '82) Morris says he should hang out for a week or so in

the Arezin Hotel in Metullah, Israel. Don't expect to be treated as a liberator; Haddad has plenty of grunts," who are referred to as "volunteers." Our sources estimate that there are about 100 mercs in Lebanon, of which five or six are Americans. Most of the foreigners have little previous military service or training.

Obviously, the situation is not stable, and Haddad is probably moving his headquarters to Sidon. Look for the whole story in future issues of SOF.

TANZANIANS LOOT SEYCHELLES . . .

Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere apparently has designated himself as the military protector of Africa.

He has most recently offered to send 200 "advisers" to assist the Marxist government in Mozambique.

But Nyerere's troops are not noted for their discipline or good behavior. During the abortive invasion of the Seychelle Islands led by "Mad Mike" Hoare, some of the about 90 Tanzanian troops already in the islands took part in the fighting. A day or so later, 400 more arrived and immediately upon landing at the airport moved out to the duty-free shop and looted about \$85,000 in merchandise. Then they cleaned out the snack bar. Next they emptied cash drawers at a bank branch at the airport and were about to blow open some safes when Seychelles police arrived and halted the

Continued on page 91

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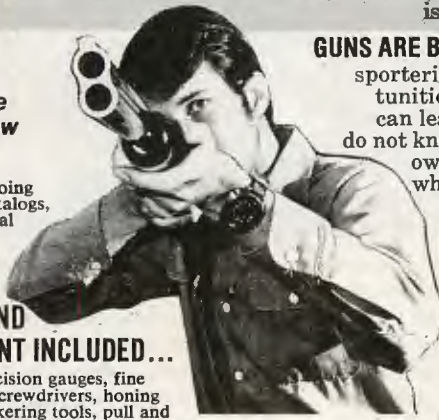
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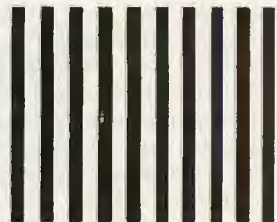
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Vietnam Tribute

by Gen. William C. Westmoreland



HISTORY may judge that American aid to South Vietnam constituted one of man's more noble crusades, one that had less to do with the domino theory and a strategic interest for the United States than with the simple equation of a strong nation helping an aspiring nation to reach a point where it had some reasonable chance to achieve and keep a degree of freedom and human dignity.

Even though American resolve fell short in the end, it remains a fact that few countries have ever engaged in such idealistic magnanimity; and no gain or attempted gain for human freedom can be discounted.

It is also a fact that America held the line in Vietnam for 10 years against inevitable, rapid expansion of communism in Southeast Asia, thus providing a shield behind which the other countries of Southeast Asia (Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines) could politically mature and build self-confidence toward the resistance of future communist pressures.

At last, America and the world are beginning to realize that America was not defeated militarily on the battlefield in Vietnam, but by propaganda involving lies and exaggerations here at home. Although in the main unwitting, such propaganda sapped the traditional dedication to a cause, persistence and courage of America.

Ironically, the Vietnam veteran deserves even more appreciation than his veteran father of the war in Korea and his veteran grandfather of World War II. Why? Simply because in those earlier wars the country was generally unified behind those sent to the battlefield. But not so with Vietnam.

Have you ever paused to consider that during the Vietnam War there were more Americans here at home cheering on the communist enemy and waving his flag than there were Vietnamese doing likewise in all of Vietnam? Can you imagine putting your life on the line in the combat zone when a boy who lived next door may have been visibly supporting your nearby armed enemy from some chosen campus sanctuary remote from the battlefield? Can you imagine living through that ordeal only to come home to stony silence or even hostility? And then with the release of the American hostages, held by the irrational Iranian regime, and the overwhelming reception they received upon release, the mindless lack of welcome of the Vietnam veteran stood in stark contrast. The psychological pressures on that man in uniform were overwhelming.

Nor did we fight alone in Vietnam. Thirty-four other na-

tions contributed food, medicine, technical advisers, equipment, training, economic aid and the like. Four more — Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, and the Republic of Korea — also furnished combat troops. A fifth — the Republic of the Philippines — provided a civic action group that had its own security force of infantry, armor and artillery. The total of foreign troops was 68,000. This was more than had fought under the United Nations in Korea.

If only the communists are to assist people of emerging nations, what hope is there for those who aspire to freedom? We may well be unable to afford to be the world's policeman, but neither can we afford to fail to live up to the responsibilities that the accidents of a bountiful land and a beneficent fate have placed upon us. It is fashionable today in some quarters to disparage idealism, patriotism and zeal; but if there are to be no more Vietnams, is there to be no more support of aspiring freedom, protection of the weak against the strong?

What of John F. Kennedy's stirring pledge "to assure the survival and success of liberty"? As many have observed, the price of freedom is never cheap, nor is even the survival of existing freedom. But we see from the plight of the boat people and of that of the refugees pouring into Thailand, the price of freedom's loss is greater still. Though we did not succeed in achieving our stated purpose in Vietnam, a lesser nation would never have tried at all. President Reagan said it for us: "Ours was, in truth, a noble cause."

But despite these psychological pressures that have scarred many men, the percentage of those psychologically affected veterans is not much greater than experienced after other wars. But in the aftermath of Vietnam, we have heard so much about this percentage-wise small group that the man on the street has been given the false impression that most Vietnam veterans are psychiatric patients. Such is not the case.

As I travel around this huge country of ours, I meet many, many Vietnam veterans and I can tell you the overwhelming majority are doing very well indeed. They are a precious and valuable national asset. They are moving into positions of responsibility and leadership across the spectrum of our society. America should be proud of them. ✕

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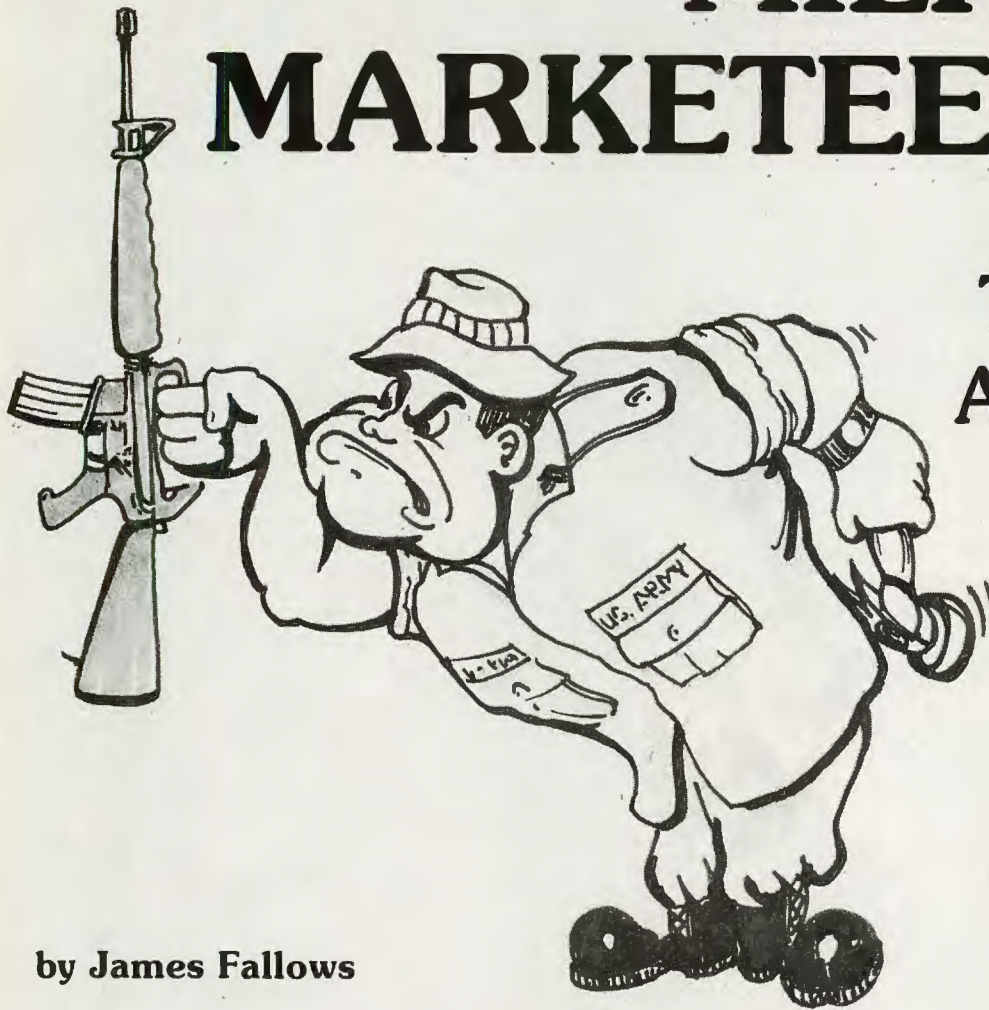
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MILITARY MARKETEERING

Turns the AR-15 into A Toy



by James Fallows

THE design of every military weapon involves tensions among the imperatives of the battlefield, the habits and interests of supply agencies, the desire to save money, and the contradictory desire to spend it. The weapon whose story is the subject of this chapter was created with unusual attention, especially in the early stages of its development, to the requirements of reliable performance in combat and low price. By the time it entered production, some of its most striking virtues had been removed.

The M16 rifle had been a brilliant technical success in its early models, but was perverted by bureaucratic pressures into a weapon that betrayed its users in Vietnam. In this case are signs of the best, and worst, tendencies in the way the United States selects its weapons.

Between 1965 and 1969, more than one million American soldiers served in combat in Vietnam. One can argue that they should never have been sent there, or that the strategy under which they were commanded ensured their demoralization and defeat. No one can argue that, while there, the soldiers should have been given inferior equipment. Yet

that is what happened. During those years, in which more than 40,000 American soldiers were killed by hostile fire and more than 250,000 wounded, American troops in Vietnam were equipped with a rifle their superiors knew would fail when put to the test.

The rifle was known as the M16; it was a replacement for the M14, a heavier weapon that was the previous standard. The original version of the M16, a commercial model developed by the Armalite company and known as the AR-15, was the most reliable, and the most lethal, infantry rifle ever invented. But within months of its introduction in combat, it was known among soldiers as a weapon that might jam and misfire, and could pose as great a danger to them as to their enemy. These problems, which loomed so large on the battlefield, were entirely the result of modifications made to the rifle's original design by the Army's own ordnance bureaucracy. The Army's modifications had very little to do with observation of warfare, but quite a lot to do with settling organizational scores.

By the middle of 1967, when the M16 had been in combat for about a year and

a half, a sufficient number of soldiers had written to their parents about their pathetically unreliable equipment, and a sufficient number of parents had sent those letters to their congressmen, to attract the attention of a congressional investigating committee. The committee, headed by Representative Richard Ichord, a Democrat from Missouri, conducted an exhaustive inquiry into the origins of the M16 problem. Much of the credit for the hearings belongs to the committee's counsel, Earl J. Morgan. The hearing record, nearly 600 pages long,¹ is a forgotten document, which received modest press attention at the time and calls up only dim recollections now. Yet it is the purest portrayal of the banality of evil in the records of modern American defense.

Nearly a century before American troops were ordered into Vietnam, weapons designers, especially in Europe, had made a discovery in the science of "wound ballistics." The discovery was that a small, fast-traveling bullet often did a great deal more damage than a larger round when fired into human or (for the experiments) animal flesh. The explanation lay in physics. When the

bullet passed from a medium of one density, such as air, into a medium of different density, the bullet became unstable and began to tumble. This was true for bullets fired through air into water, and it was equally true for bullets as they entered human flesh. What impeded the bullet from tumbling was its own weight and momentum; the lighter the bullet, the more rapidly and wildly it would tumble end-for-end in flesh. A large artillery round might pass straight through a human body, but a small bullet could act like a gouge. During the early stages of the congressional hearings Representative Ichord asked Eugene Stoner, the designer of the original version of the M16, to explain the apparent paradox of a small bullet's destructive power:

ICHORD: One Army boy told me that he had shot a Viet Cong near the eye with an M14 [which uses a substantially heavier bullet] and the bullet did not make too large a hole on exit, but he shot a Viet Cong under similar circumstances in the same place with a M16 and his whole head was reduced to pulp. This would not appear to make sense. You have greater velocity but the bullet is lighter.

STONER: That is the advantage that a small or light bullet has over a heavy one when it comes to wound ballistics... What it amounts to is that bullets are stabilized to fly through air, and not through water or a body, which is approximately the same density as the water. And they are stable as long as they are in the air. When they hit something, they immediately go unstable... If you are talking about a .30-caliber bullet [like that used in the M14], that might remain stable through a human body... While a little bullet, because it has a low mass, senses an instability situation faster and reacts much faster. This is what makes a little bullet pay off so much in wound ballistics.²

A far-sighted troop commander, Gen. Wyman, had asked Stoner to design his rifle precisely to take advantage of the "payoff" of smaller bullets. The AR-15, the precursor of the M16, used .22-caliber bullets instead of the .30-caliber that had long been standard for the Army. (A word about "caliber." Ammunition is described in two ways, by millimeter measure or "caliber." Both are measures of the bullet's diameter, one expressed, obviously, in millimeters, and the other in inches. A ".22-caliber" bullet has a diameter of .22 inches, and is the same thing as a 5.56mm bullet. That is what the M16 uses. A .30-caliber bullet, or 7.62mm, had been the standard for most Army rifles, including the M1, which was used in World War II and Korea, and the M14, which was introduced after the Korean War.)

As early as 1928, an Army "Caliber Board" conducted firing experiments in Aberdeen, Maryland, and then had recommended a move toward smaller ammunition, perhaps of the .27-caliber range; but the Army, for reasons that were partly technical but largely traditional (and that will be more fully explained as the story goes on), refused then and for the next thirty-five years to change from the .30-caliber bullet, which it preferred to describe as "full-sized."

A second discovery about weaponry also lay behind the design of Eugene Stoner's AR-15. In his studies of combat units during World War II, S.L.A. Marshall found that nearly four-fifths of combat soldiers never fired their weapons during battles. This finding prompted a closer look at the weapons the soldiers used. It turned out that one group of soldiers was an exception to this rule: those who carried the Browning Automatic Rifles (BAR). These were essentially portable machine guns, which could spray out bursts of continuous fire. The M1s that the other soldiers carried were "semiautomatic," and required a separate trigger squeeze for each round. Within a combat group, firing would begin with the BAR man and spread out from him. The nearer a soldier with an M1 stood to the BAR man, the more likely he was to fire. The explanation most often suggested was that the infantryman carrying a normal rifle felt that his actions were ultimately futile.

Infantrymen Are Erratic Agents Of Death

As John Keegan said in *The Face of Battle*, "Infantrymen, however well-trained and well-armed, however resolute, however ready to kill, remain erratic agents of death. Unless centrally directed, they will choose, perhaps badly, their own targets, will open and cease fire individually, will be put off their aim by the enemy's return of fire, will be distracted by the wounding of those near them, will yield to fear or excitement, will fire high, low, or wide."³ The normal infantryman could not see the enemy clearly or have any sense of whether he had hit. The BAR man, by contrast, had the sense that he could dominate a certain area — "hose it down," in the

military slang — and destroy anyone who happened to be there.

From the end of World War II, there was a demand from some Army officers for a new infantry weapon that would be light, reasonably accurate, and capable of fully automatic fire. The response of the Army's ordnance organizations was to build the M14. This was basically an automatic-firing, less solidly made version of the Army's previous standard, the M1. Like the M1, it used a large .30-caliber round. Its disadvantage was that it was virtually uncontrollable when in fully automatic firing. The explosive charge needed to propel the heavy bullets was so great, and the rifle itself so flimsily built in an effort to make it lightweight that the kick was ferocious. A soldier who used it on automatic fire was likely to get a nosebleed, in addition to being unable to control the weapon's aim. It was with this rifle that American troops trained in the early and middle sixties, and with it they went to Vietnam.

The M14 was a product of the Army's own arsenal system, an informal congeries of weapons laboratories, private contractors, and the Army Materiel Command that is often generically known as the "ordnance corps." The ordnance corps had been in charge of small-arms design for the Army for more than a hundred years. In questions of technology, it emphasized the outlook of the "gravel-bellies," the sharpshooters and marksmen who measured a weapon by how well it helped them hit a target four hundred, five hundred, six hundred yards away in peacetime rifle competition. "The M14 had been developed on the premise that aimed fire, the fire of the marksman, was of the utmost importance in combat," a Rand employee named Thomas McNaugher wrote in a study of the M16.⁴ "To the U.S. Army, it was more than a premise, it was a creed that had evolved over nearly a century since the service adopted its first rifle in 1855."⁵

Giving generous credit to the element of rationality in the ordnance corps' practices, McNaugher says that the marksman's philosophy was appealing because the "Ordnance Department, the agency that developed and produced the service's rifles and ammunition, preferred tactics that stressed slow and deliberate fire because it meant less waste of ammunition and hence less strain on the Department's supply lines and production facilities."⁶

For the marksman's purposes, a large, heavy round was ideal, since it remained steady in flight and was less sensitive to wind. Hand in hand with this mentality went an insistence on rigid technical specifications. If a round didn't leave the muzzle at 3,250 feet per second, it was no good; if it couldn't be fired in the

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Ankle-deep in brass around dug-in Browning M1919A6 .30-06 LMG. Note flash cone has been removed from muzzle. SF survivors of Kannack wear old-style zip-side leather boots.

THEY CAME TO KANNACK

Where Courage
Was A Common Virtue

Text & Photos by Wallace Viau

FROM HIGHLANDS TO HIGH SCHOOL

Lt. Col. Wallace Viau was a member of the 1st Special Forces Group, served three tours in Vietnam and was district adviser, U.S. Asst. Military Commander from 1969-70 in the highlands. Since his retirement in 1975, Viau has taught military science at the Ft. Wingate Bureau of Indian Affairs high school and was business manager of Prospect Hall, a small private secondary school in Frederick, Md. This story is his first publication in his new career as writer of adventure and mystery stories.



“**W**ILL you get rid of that thing?” my wife scolded. “Why don’t you put it downstairs in the storage room?”

She was referring to an old ChiCom SKS gathering dust in the corner of the hall closet. I had kept it around since March 1965, when it was carried with grim determination and great courage by a young Viet Cong soldier. He left it and his life on the edge of defensive wire at a remote Special Forces camp in the Vietnam central highlands. The camp was called Kannack.

Kannack was located in Binh Dinh Province north of An Khe, which at that time was a collection of mud huts and mean little shops. (An Khe would later gain fame as headquarters for the 1st Air Cavalry Division.) The camp had been placed in the An Khe Valley as an outpost for Highway 19, main supply route (MSR) between Qui Nhon port and Vietnam’s highland provinces.

During the winter-spring offensive of

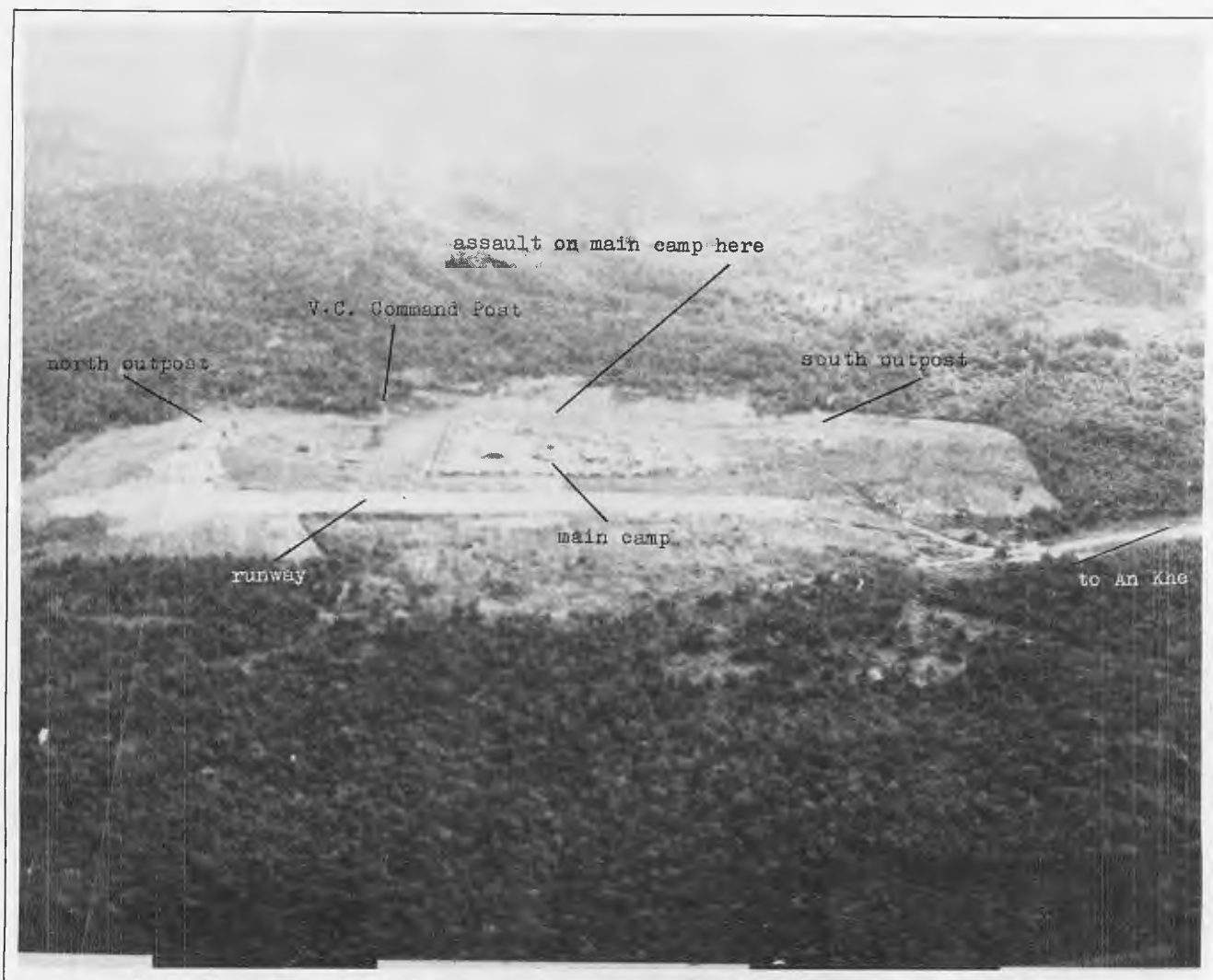
1964-65, the Viet Cong turned their fury on the highlands. The battle at An Loa in the northern part of Binh Dinh Province in December signaled a change from their usual tactics of ambush and hit-and-run to bold multi-battalion attacks. Then in February 1965, with attacks on the U.S. II Corps advisers’ billets and the air field in Pleiku, the VC launched a series of large-scale assaults in northern Binh Dinh. This gambit was quickly followed by an effort in central Binh Dinh to cut Highway 19. If successful, the other highland provinces of Kontum and Pleiku would have been isolated and vulnerable to communist takeover.

The first blow the VC directed against Highway 19 fell on an unfortunate Regional Force company which on 19 February was moving from Pleiku to positions in the Mang Yang Pass, a place already haunted by the ghosts of French soldiers killed by the Viet Minh in a deadly ambush years before. On 20 February, the VC launched their all-out effort to

Dead VC under fence, part of elite wire-breaching team, wears rope instead of web gear and canteen cover for pocket.

seize Highway 19 and cut off the highlands. They struck at two forward operational bases of the Suoi Doi Special Forces camp located just east of Mang Yang Pass, and were finally repulsed with heavy losses to both sides after the II Corps commander threw in a Ranger battalion and an Airborne task force. To relieve one of the forward operation bases, Gen. William Westmoreland, for the first time in the Vietnam War, authorized the use of jet aircraft in support of U.S. Army Aviation helicopters making the lift.

Defeated along Highway 19, the VC next turned their attention to our camp at Kannack. We had not been able to stop the infiltration of units attacking Highway 19, but we had presented a dangerous threat to VC resupply and



evacuation of wounded from these engagements. Our Montagnards had carried out several successful operations. On the last, a VC unit was ambushed and five of its soldiers killed with the loss of one of our men. It was clear the VC would have to deal with us.

A reporter from a national magazine later described Kannack from the air as looking like a football waiting to be kicked off. It was remote even for a Special Forces camp. Outside of the cleared area around the camp stretched a vast sea of jungle that could hide an army. It did.

In fact, it was a strong defensive position constructed with careful attention to terrain. The camp was built on three slight rises of ground. On the north was a small circular outpost manned at night by a platoon and separated from the main camp by a gully and 200 meters of cleared ground. The main camp was rectangular, about 150 meters wide and 300 long. One hundred meters south of the main camp was another outpost also manned at night by a platoon. Both outposts were built slightly higher than and overlooking the main camp. All three positions had aboveground bunkers and strong defensive wires thickly seeded with claymore mines and trip flares. To

the west was a dirt runway running the entire length of the camp. It was a perfect field of fire and made attack from that direction unlikely. To the east of the camp rough, broken ground sloped gently down to a deep creek bed. This was the most likely direction of approach, and our best company and strongest positions were on that side.

The camp's garrison was made up of an American and Vietnamese Special Forces detachment, a Vietnamese platoon and four Civilian Irregular Defense Group companies. The CIDG companies or Strike Force were recruited from the Bahnar, Rhade, Mung and Rho Montagnard tribes. These units varied greatly in operational effectiveness, but since they all had their families with them we were sure they would fight like hell if attacked: They knew there was no alternative. As was often the case in the first phase of the war, the camp had no artillery support; air support was on call but required some lead time. However, the overall defensive situation was good.

Fields of fire around the camp were cleared and defensive wire was extensive and well-maintained. The camp had an ample supply of ammunition for the mortars and machine guns. With the

Green sea of tropical cover surrounds remote SF camp: Looking east, note runway in foreground, flanking elevated outposts, fortified central camp and far bush concealing VC build-up and command post.

outposts and ambushes placed out for the night we felt secure and slept soundly on the evening of 7 March 1965.

At 0145 hours, 8 March, the bone-jarring thud of an exploding mortar round a few meters from the team hut woke us. The radio watch raced through the hut, yelling for the men to roll out. When he reached my cubicle I was already groping in the dark for my boots. He pulled aside the fly screen and said in a surprisingly calm voice, "Get up, captain. We are being hit."

The first duty in an attack is to get to your assigned position, which in this instance was the bunkers and mortar pit which formed the camp's inner perimeter. The team hut was cleared in what felt like an eternity but was actually seconds; every man slept with his weapon, an extra ammo bandolier, web gear and boots. The clattering of shrapnel on the corrugated tin roof and the splintering of bullet-struck bamboo walls provided incentive to leave the hut's false security and run out into the



wall of noise of mortar blasts, small-arms bursts, shouted orders and screamed curses, punctuating the more constant flow of noise from the already wounded.

The inside of the team hut had been pitch dark but the sky over Kannack was bathed in an eerie light. Running out into that night was like walking from the dark passageway out into the baseball stadium and being momentarily startled that you could see it all. Burning huts, the flash of exploding incoming rounds and our mortars throwing up round after round of illumination denied the attackers cover of dark.

In the communications room, our radio man lay flat on the floor, calmly talking to headquarters. He had already notified them the camp was under attack and made the standard request to the Air Force for a flare ship — which would not arrive until 0400 hours.

An inspection of the inner perimeter was in order. All the men had made it to their bunkers — three wounded, none critically — but two of the Strike Force died in the first barrage. One was caught walking in the open, and the other had slung his hammock above his bunker firing edge. His riddled hammock still hung there; he sprawled on the bunker floor. Occasionally a flash from the edge of the jungle across the airstrip and the

zing and crack of a round close overhead would betray an enemy sniper. This gave us something to shoot at until we could figure out where the main attack was coming from.

Our medic looked to our wounded and the weapons man cranked up the 81mm mortar and it started making noise like a very loud metronome. Return fire nearly disappeared and we knew the camp had held. The first assault had failed.

How many were out there? We knew the VC could easily mass enough men and equipment to take a remote camp defended by only a few companies — but had they?

Those questions were answered when a recoilless rifle began to rake the main camp methodically from the north outpost. We knew some of our wounded were still up there, but we turned 81mm mortars on the outpost. Afterwards the tripod, shell casing and blood trails on the ground were the only signs the recoilless had been there. When the north outpost was retaken we would also find the VC had attempted to turn our 60mm mortar against us. The mortar was relaid facing the main camp. Two mortar rounds were jammed in the tube and several VC bodies were piled on top of one another in the mortar pit. One man must have loaded the tube and it

Like Roman triumphal ceremony, Green Berets display captured weapons: WWII American and contemporary VC copy Thompson .45s, NVA 7.62x25mm K-50 SMGs, USSR AK-47s and RPDs, Chinese SKSs and 57mm type 36 recoilless rifle, and BARs.

misfired. He was killed and a second man loaded another round without clearing the tube. We were lucky.

A hut used to store ammunition on the south outpost took a direct hit and burned brightly, illuminating that position. Tiny figures could be seen running back and forth across the bare top — they were not our men. Some of our people were still on the outpost and had barricaded themselves in the main bunker. They kept the VC from using our outpost against us.

We knew which way the enemy would attack and were ready. In tight formation at a dead run, they charged us along a diagonal path the Montagnard women had beaten out, going to the creek bed to bathe and wash clothes. Their mortars and B-40 rocket launchers gave them support, but the assault team was perfectly exposed to enfilade fire. Small-arms fire cut them down and the survivors turned at the wire and fled to the creek and safety. Bodies stretched out



Happy to be alive SF patrollers from Kannack pose for class photo, author Viau on left.



Dead and wounded VC left ordnance to victors: AK mags, 7.62x39mm ammo, submachine-gun mags, web gear, fork to place bangalores, Chinese defensive fragmentation stick grenades. Caps off and friction fuse-pulls missing from grenades support legend of Chinese grenade unreliability.

along the path's length and scattered over the field attested to VC courage. The only excuse for that attack must have been the VC commander's mistaken belief the wire was cut.

Their wire-breaching teams had moved against the main camp under cover of the first barrage. They cut the outside fence, disarmed the trip flares and crawled under the second fence to place bangalore torpedoes to breach the inner fences. These teams failed. They were detected and slaughtered with small-arms fire and hand grenades. The day following the battle, one of these men was found barely alive with serious



wounds. When he saw our team, he reached for his rifle and was promptly shot. They chose their best men for that kind of task.

Field phones were carried by all three VC attacking elements. The wire ran back to the creek bed on the east side of the camp to their command post. The bodies later showed how well the wire pointed targets for our mortars.

At the first sign of dawn, one of our platoons reoccupied the north outpost; the only VC there were dead. Another platoon counterattacked the south outpost and killed a few holdouts. Our people came scrambling out of their bunkers, grateful to have survived the night while several VC tried to run in plain view and were cut down by fire from the east side of the camp. Slumped over a VC soldier was a dead Montagnard woman. She was not from any of our tribes. We never knew what her story was.

Shortly after first light, prop-driven A-20s swooped low, dropping a deadly skein of anti-personnel bombs down the center of the creek bed. U.S. Army

helicopter gunships raked and chased the retreating VC column. Our patrols went around the camp, picking up enemy weapons, equipment and wounded VC abandoned in the retreat.

A day later, a patrol found the body of a young officer laid out along the side of the trail with his hands folded across his chest. A battalion personnel notebook and a photograph of him looking determined in the white, high-necked, formal uniform of the North Vietnamese Army were found on the body. Next to him in the photo was an attractive Vietnamese woman in the traditional Vietnamese *ao dai*. In front of them stood two small girls.

The Viet Cong left 126 of their soldiers at Kannack. Forty-three of our people died. The American team felt lucky this time: three out of 12 wounded. We delivered Montagnard dead to their villages for tribal burial. The VC were dumped into two pits scooped out by a bulldozer.

Several days later the Montagnard MIAs from the outpost wandered in barefoot and exhausted. They had been

Four-bag thick bunker wall blown by satchel-charge in overrun of southern outpost.

captured and carried north without their boots — but unfettered. They said their guards were forced to help their many wounded comrades. After a day, the prisoners just walked away from the column. With dozens of their fellow tribesmen lying in body bags it did not seem appropriate to ask too many questions.

The Vietnamese general commanding II Corps came and passed out handfuls of medals. In a few months, A-231 was replaced by a fresh A Team from the States. They hung on for a short time until Kannack was abandoned when the First Air Cavalry Division absorbed the camp's operational area. The war had entered a new phase.

Someday, if it is ever possible, I would like to go back. I would like to tell someone there what happened and where the VC soldiers who came to Kannack are buried. ☒

KABUL'S URBAN GUERRILLAS

Killing Russians House-to-House

Text & Photos by Mark Warman

Except for Hadji Rafiq, who wished to be identified, the names used in this article are false — as are some of the locations. I have only used names where ease of continuity demands it, others remain unidentified. The reasons are obvious.

THE first chance I got to talk to Ahmad was late on the night of 7 June in a safe house in one of the villages between Chewakee and Bagrami which make up the middle class suburbs of Kabul. Earlier we had marched from the Pakistan border to a village near Kabul. The march took 43 hours, with short breaks for rest taking up another 11 hours. A pack of cigarettes a day and the mountainous terrain had made talking, at least on my part, an impossibility. Then, while I waited in the village, Ahmad had gone ahead to Kabul to arrange the operation I was to observe the next night.

Ahmad had met our group of 28 armed mujahideen on the plain outside Kabul and under a full moon had guided us through the suburbs to the house I now occupied with an interpreter, a friend of Ahmad who belonged to one of the Peshawar-based, Khomeini-style religious parties and Ahmad's area commander. After introducing me to a small serious boy, he had disappeared, leaving me in the unaccustomed luxury of a house with curtains, pictures on the wall and mattresses on the floor. It was a pleasant change from the cold stone floors of the tea houses along the way.

Ahmad returned late that night and, while I listened, made his report to the area commander. Only the pallor of his usually dark face betrayed his tension; he was still soft-spoken and conscious of his obligations to his guest.

Although curfew was in force, Ahmad and two other mujahideen

had penetrated the city center. Outside an office building being used by the Soviet military administration, they had tricked an Afghan government soldier on sentry duty by demanding to speak to the officer in charge. When the sentry turned to call back into the building, he was clubbed to the ground. Ahmad and another mujahid had drawn pistols and darted in through the door.

In the first office they had come upon two Russian soldiers, whom they shot. There were other Russians sleeping in the building and, pausing only long enough to hide two time bombs in the hope of catching other Russians, they had slipped back into the night. At the time Ahmad was unsure whether these bombs had been discovered or whether they had gone off, but he was able to report the deaths of three enemy and the capture of a Kalashnikov rifle.

He then went on to tell me of the difficulties his group faced in these urban operations. Time pencils for bombs were in short supply and no one in the group had the expertise to make them. He had heard that plastic masks existed which distorted the face without being too obvious but such things were not available in Afghanistan or Pakistan.

An American sympathizer, a friend of Ahmad from before the war, had promised to send some aerosol Mace but the Pakistani government had refused permission for it to be landed. This or tear gas pistols would be invaluable in disabling individual soldiers so that their weapons could be seized on the streets. There was a severe lack of silencers for pistols and Ahmad complained of being unable to find a poison concentrated enough to be used on the tips of sewing needles for selective assassinations.

Despite these problems,

Ahmad's group has not been unsuccessful. They claim 600 kills over the last two years. Their members operate in the city in groups of two or three. Their targets have been informers, Communist Party members, soldiers — whose rifles they take — and members of both the Soviet and Afghan KGB. I am unable to confirm these figures but at other times facts given me by this group checked out. I also saw that over half of the group members carried AKMS folding-stock versions of the AK-47. Their possession by the mujahideen would indicate some level of success within the city.

The guerrilla organization in which Ahmad is an operational commander — the Jaba, Malang, Khurd Kabul, Bagrami Group — divides its operations into four separate sectors. First, there are urban operations carried out by two or three members. Second, drawing from a force of 600 based in the village of Chewakee, a Kabul suburb less than five clicks from the center of the city, groups of 20 to 30 attack the rear of military columns leaving the city — usually acting on information received from informers within the army command. Thirdly, they attack modern government apartments specially built for the Soviet invaders, bridges, electricity stations and military posts around the city. They like hitting these targets after government announcements that the war against the rebels is being won.

Finally, in conjunction with another group based in a town 17 clicks from Kabul, they attack barracks and larger military posts in the Kabul Valley. The town, Khak-e-Jabar, is made up of a

Muhajid shows off captured RPDM LMG above fields of Khak-e-Jabar Valley. Drum carrier on gun and in pouches hold 100 rounds each of 7.62 x 39mm cartridges in non-disintegrating linked belts.



number of villages, the names of which comprise the group's title (the exception being Bagrami, a suburb of Kabul). Near to one of the villages is a hillside honeycombed with caves and it is here that the group's commander, Hadji Mohammad Rafiq, a 40-year-old former magistrate, has his headquarters. Rafiq commands a force which totals 1,200 mujahideen and, together with the other group operating in the immediate area, can call on 1,800 men in defense of the town and valley. There are also two smaller groups of mujahideen in the hills at the southern end of the valley. Both of these groups are armed with Degtyarev-Shpagin K-38 12.7mm heavy machine guns, whose presence keeps the helicopters flying much higher than the ones I saw in Kunar Province last year. Apart from some bombing, neither government nor Soviet troops have attempted a clearing operation to the southeast of Kabul where Hadji Rafiq estimates that at least 5,000 armed mujahideen are operating. It is interesting, too, that the caves which Rafiq's group occupy were originally dug by the British in 1875 when they occupied Kabul and were used by them as a first line of defense against attack from the southeast.

At midday on 7 June in the company of 28 mujahideen, I set off down what used to be the motor road to Kabul. It is closed now near to the capital both by mujahideen roadblocks and by bombing, but in peacetime 20 percent of the town's population of 6,000 used it to commute to white collar jobs in the capital. The make-up of the group also reflects this proximity to the capital: 40 percent of its members are educated men, the remainder coming from the families of farmers. Most of those I accompanied were in their late teens and early 20s, but they ranged from the two youngest, who were 14 and 15, to a 55-year-old former law graduate, armed with an Egyptian-made copy of the Carl Gustaf SMG. The operation's commander, 27-year-old Ahmad Shah, carried a captured Yugoslav-made copy of the American 60mm mortar. Over half the group was armed with AKMS rifles and the remainder carried locally-made copies of the British short magazine Lee Enfield and a few captured Simonov SKS rifles. It is a tribute to the SMLE, which saw service in WWI, that many

mujahideen prefer it to the modern Kalashnikov, claiming it to be accurate up to 1,500 meters compared with the AK's 600 meters. I can't say that I saw shooting like that demonstrated but I was impressed by one young mujahid who borrowed my interpreter's rifle, fired it for the first time and split a stick at over 100 meters.

We marched down the road in broad daylight, leaving it only to climb the last mountain before the Kabul Valley. We stood looking down on the capital near three towers built, again, by the British and dominating the approach from the south. One of the group pointed out that the British seemed to have had more tactical sense than the Russians were now demonstrating. The area was completely free of any enemy presence. We continued to move in twos and threes along the northern side of the mountain. We were in full view of the city, but no attempt was made to stop us. Coming down to the valley floor, we waited in the dried-up bed of a small stream until dusk before moving out onto the plain.

There was a full moon yet the mujahideen marched openly along a well-used dirt road, making no attempt to conceal themselves. The bright green sodium-vapor lights of Pul-e-Charki Jail were clearly visible to our right, less than five clicks away. Pul-e-Charki is also the base for the Soviet 4th and 15th Divisions but there were no patrols. We marched openly through the villages which form the Kabul suburbs, past the burnt-out shell of the country's largest fertilizer factory, before coming to a halt where we were to spend the night.

Inside the house I met a young

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— Bill Guthrie



man whose full beard and uncut hair signified his membership in one of the religious parties. I had not been there five minutes when he invited me into the city to watch the fighting that night. I was still unaware of the ease with which the mujahideen moved around the city at night and turned down his offer because I did not wish to be separated from the group. I must admit the prospect of sleeping on a mattress also had something to do with my decision.

At 2200 hours we went onto the roof to hear the sound of automatic weapon fire from Bala Hisar, the old fortress at the center of the city, now a major Russian base area. The mujahid told me that the three short bursts I had heard would have been to deal with sentries. The guerrillas would now be inside the targeted building using pistols. Fifteen minutes later in a suburb to the northeast there was a 20-minute fire fight when members of the RAF1Q group attacked a militia post.

I ate dinner, talked to Ahmad and probably missed some more firing. But once again from the roof at 0130 hours, I heard the sound of firing in Bala Hisar. It was more prolonged than before and a red flare was fired by the defenders. This may have been a call for tank support. Soon afterwards two mortar rounds were fired in the city center and then came the heaviest firing of the night: long bursts of



machine-gun fire from Bala Hisar once again. I was told it had been a quiet night because many mujahideen had gone out of the city to neighboring Loghar Province to join in the resistance to a sweep operation being conducted by government forces.

Mujahideen claims that the Kabul Valley and suburbs, with the sole exception of the city center, belonged to them between 1500 hours and the end of curfew at 0400 were demonstrated to me the next day. I spent the late afternoon in a park with the mujahideen I had accompanied from Khak-e-Jabar. They were fully armed, sitting relaxed under the shade of some mulberry and chinar trees with the city center clearly visible in the background. Occasionally one would leave the group to say his prayers or read from the Koran.

At about sunset, the peace of the afternoon was shattered by the sound of firing from the Loghar road, about four clicks away, to the southwest of the city. Mujahideen had ambushed a convoy on its way to the Loghar operation from the first mountainside outside the city. The firing was heavy, included artillery and lasted several hours into the night. I was surprised to see that the convoy received no helicopter support, but the mujahideen assured me that the helicopters did not fly at night. Of the group's 30 members, only one had ever seen this happen, and he

Free men besieged by tyrants, freedom fighters use any means to drive out Russians: Leader Hadji Mohammed Rafiq (center) wears 9mm ball in staggered-loop pistol bandolier with .303 P-14 at shoulder, Ahmad Shah (left) holds recent-manufacture AKMS without compensator and Ahmad (right) displays "Port Said" Egyptian copy of Carl Gustaf 45 B 9mm SMG.

added that the area had been brightly lit by flares at the time.

Our unit commander, Ahmad Shah, had planned to attack a barracks near Pul-e-Charki that night but had been forced to abandon the plan at the last moment when he heard that another group was about to hit the same target. While this illustrates the level of fighting around Kabul, it unfortunately also demonstrates the total lack of communication between the different groups.

He decided to split his force. Half were sent to join in the fighting on the Loghar road and I was to accompany the original 30 in an attack on an army post which protected an area of the city known as Electric Village and whose population was composed almost entirely of Khalq and Parcham Party members. As we came out of the house to meet up with the attacking party, we passed four armed men hurrying down the street to join in the fighting on the Loghar road. No greetings were exchanged — it seemed the sight of armed mujahideen on the

suburban streets was now so common as to go unnoticed.

Armed with an RPG-7, the 60mm mortar and a 50/50 split between Enfields and Kalashnikovs, we marched in single file through the suburbs. We passed through a brightly-lit bazaar outside a mosque where about 30 mujahideen armed with RPGs, LMGs and other small arms were relaxing in front of the shuttered shops after returning from the battle on the Loghar road. We passed through another suburb, then crossed some fields, some planted with wheat, some bare. Four hundred meters from the lights at the edge of the city, I was left with Ahmad and a mujahideen guard to lie in one of a number of mud *sangars* built in the corner of an empty field. (In Afghanistan's mountains the digging of fighting holes is quite impossible. They build upward, using rocks, and the habit is so ingrained that they stay with it even when they have to dig first to get the material to build the *sangar*.)

We waited almost an hour while the mujahideen infiltrated the streets and prepared to attack the post, which was situated in a large building directly in front of us. They needed to exercise particular care because they knew that most of the party members in the houses they passed were armed. While we waited, the old mujahid on my left — in total disregard for what seemed to me our very exposed position — wrapped himself from head to toe in a blanket and went to sleep. Around us the fields were faintly lit in orange from the succession of parachute flares being fired over the main reservoir some distance away.

At 2330 the first mortar round was fired followed by a few bursts of Kalashnikov fire. In the silence which followed Ahmad Shah could be faintly heard calling on the defenders to surrender and join their fellow countrymen. I had been told that 50 percent of conscripts were usually willing to do this. But there were no wild bursts of the face-saving fire which usually come before a surrender. These defenders were waiting for targets.

Fighting continued for an hour and a half. Some of the mujahideen moved into surrounding houses to fire down on the defenders. We could clearly hear the rapid popping of AK fire, the crack of the Lee Enfields and the slow hammering of a 12.7 being fired by the government forces. Four more

60mm mortar rounds were fired and an RPG arced across the night in front of us. Occasional bursts of red tracer floated over our heads. Early in the engagement a red flare had been fired and after an hour we heard the sound of tanks. But the most spectacular event of the attack was caused by a stray bullet which cut a power line, bringing it down in a hundred-foot shower of blue and orange sparks. I could smell it 400 meters away.

The tanks failed to press home any kind of forcible attack, sniping at the mujahideen with machine-gun fire from a safe distance. After another half hour the mujahideen withdrew and, though it would have been difficult because of the number of irrigation channels, the tanks made no attempt to pursue them over open ground. Five minutes before we saw them, we could hear them laughing and joking as they came toward us in a group. They had suffered no casualties themselves and claimed to have destroyed half the building. They hoped to have killed 30 of the 75 to 80 government troops defending it. There were no inflated claims; the educated members of this group are openly scornful of the exaggerated stories told by the Peshawar parties. (In fact, I was unable to leave Khak-e-Jabar as planned due to an outbreak of tribal fighting on the Pakistan side of the border.) I was later given

a confirmed report of the action. Thirteen government troops had been killed and only two of the mortar rounds had hit the target, together with the RPG. But two of the misses had landed on houses belonging to Khalq or Parcham Party members, killing four of them. The fifth mortar shell was unaccounted for.

During my enforced stay in Khak-e-Jabar, two more units went out on missions. On the night of 13 June, 77 men attacked a militia post between Pul-e-Charki and the city. They fired six rounds from a captured light artillery piece and 12 RPGs but due to a shortage of ammunition were unable to overrun the post to capture weapons. They told me they had got close enough to throw grenades, and when these ran out, some of the young mujahideen had thrown rocks. Although they had laid five ambushes on the approach roads with RPG launchers, no tanks had appeared until after dawn had forced the mujahideen to withdraw. They suffered four wounded in this engagement, one seriously cut in the neck and face. Such is their lack of medical facilities that I was asked to sew his face back together. At the end of the day a

Lacking airforce and SAMs, Afghans challenge Sov choppers with 12.7mm HMG in hills above Khak-e-Jabar.

medic came out from the city. His training consisted of three months at medical school.

The next night, members of Hadji Rafiq's group, in alliance with the valley's other large group, attacked a government barracks at Bhot Khak, three clicks away from the Russian base at Pul-e-Charki. Soviet forces did not come out to oppose them. One mujahid was killed; there were no details of enemy losses. That same night, artillery being fired at another group attacking the military school could clearly be heard in Khak-e-Jabar.

The war in Afghanistan appears to have come to a turning point this year. Soviet forces have failed to suppress the anti-communist revolt and are now in a defensive position, venturing out of their heavily defended bases only in rare circumstances, such as their recent attack on the Panjsher Valley mujahideen who threatened the road back to Russia.

Although the mujahideen have isolated the main towns, they do not yet have the capability to mount major assaults to seize heavier weapons and take the guerrilla war onto a higher level. This is not through lack of numbers but a lack of organized leadership. The Peshawar-based Khomeini-style religious parties are unable to wage classic mobile guerrilla warfare because of their fear that by concentrating their forces in one area they will leave another open to seizure by one of the other parties.

Informed Afghans believe that there are as many as 14 smaller groups who profess the desire for either Islamic democracy or some form of return to a type of tribal parliament. Several religious party members I encountered on this trip expressed anger at their leaders' refusal to fight and it seems likely that groups such as that led by Hadji Rafiq will continue to recruit new members simply because they are fighting.

These groups have fought one of the world's major military powers to a standstill despite the shameful failure of the Western democracies or the Arabs to give them military, medical or even financial aid. Members of the Rafiq group do not even have funds for a motorcycle. On operations inside Kabul they must depend on taxis or buses.

But on the military front they are slowly succeeding in turning the government forces into their armorers. Every engagement they win brings in a few more weapons.





Egypt, first under Sadat and now Mubarak, is supplying a small quantity of arms, but these go into the hands of the Peshawar parties and very few trickle through to the smaller parties. I also saw quantities of unmarked but almost certainly Chinese anti-tank mines on sale in the tribal areas of Pakistan. At no time in the last two years have I seen modern anti-aircraft weapons in the hands of the mujahideen. The 12.7s which are being used by the freedom fighters against armored helicopters are used as anti-personnel weapons by government forces.

Despite the lack of outside help, the mujahideen are growing stronger. A network for the exchange and loan of weapons such as machine guns, mortars, rocket launchers and mines is being built up by the independent groups who operate around Kabul. Hadji Rafiq's group now makes attacks in alliance with their neighboring group and the talk of the need for unity is growing. On the other hand the Soviets have only two choices: to pull out or to vastly increase their troop strength. And conventional troops have the habit of vanishing into the morass

Tribal mass production: Darra gunsmith files on frames of .32 ACP Star copies. "Primitive" craftsmen make any small arm in their shops that can be made in Western or Eastern arms factories. AK-74 (left) and AK-47 lean against wall.

of a guerrilla war, leaving scarcely a ripple behind them.

I finally reached the last small valley before the Pakistan border on Friday, 18 June. On the way in we had passed through this area at night and now I was surprised to see how prosperous it was. There was no bomb damage to the villages and all the fields were planted. The mujahideen believe that the local inhabitants are being paid off by the Karmal government and that even the local mujahideen have a non-aggression pact with the militia in a fort three km away. The Russians had taken advantage of the recent tribal fighting which closed the road inside Pakistan, thus effectively sealing off the border, to helicopter in a detachment of paratroops to reinforce the militia.

About 30 villagers of Adam Khail were sitting in the main square — an unusual sight in Afghanistan where helicopters fire on gatherings of more than three or

four people. They were well-fed in contrast to the lean and hungry mujahideen. With a great deal of smiling, they invited us to take tea with them. Hadji Rafiq, not trusting them, hurried us on through the village, sending a mujahid back to dislodge the donkey drivers who had accepted the unexpected invitation.

We moved down the hill in twos through the fields of growing wheat. The mujahideen had slung their rifles upside down on their shoulders and taken down the 7.62mm RPDM LMG which one was carrying. As we went down the hill we were also moving north, across it to our left, and the militia fort came into view about three clicks above us. An old Afghan I passed shouted back to the mujahid I was with to tell me to put a blanket on my head to cover up my white face. (This is not as unusual as it sounds. Many Afghans put one fold of the blanket they habitually carry on their shoulders over their heads in strong sunlight.)

Five minutes before we reached the valley floor, a single shot from a Kalashnikov echoed off the surrounding hills. It was a crude but almost successful signal. The forward members of our group had just joined up and were moving north along a road running parallel to a dried-up stone-covered river bed. The first 82mm mortar shell came in behind and to our right, about 100 meters away. As we ran for cover, I saw a man pulling his wife off a donkey and to our left two local mujahideen crouched behind a low wall and shouted at us, pointing beyond a house 50 meters away. Two more mortar rounds came in before we reached it. I scrambled up an eight-foot vertical mud bank supporting the first of the terraced fields which had a bunker dug into it. As four of us crouched inside I flicked my lighter and was confronted by an anti-tank mine so big it had carrying handles. I can remember my immediate reaction was to hope that no mortar shell would come down the almost vertical entrance — although the only possible difference would have been in the volume of the bang.

Three more salvos of three rounds with a 30-second pause between each round came in over the next 15 minutes but no one was hurt and no houses were damaged. But what seems certain is that the arrival of the more aggressive Russian paratroops will bring an early end to the prosperity of the villagers of Adam Khail. ☒

THANKS to the explosion of violent crime and terrorism throughout Europe and the Americas, one of the fastest-growing industries today is the protective services industry: bodyguarding. Terrorism at home and abroad has created such a demand for trained, professional bodyguards that there is a real shortage of men to meet the needs of private industry and prominent people in the entertainment field.

Most of us think we know what a bodyguard is. A typical layman imagines him as a huge mountain of rippling muscle, good at no-holds-barred back-alley combat, and semiliterate — just about able to grunt, “Yessir!”, when his employer snaps his fingers — something on the order of Oddjob in *Goldfinger*.

The typical *real-life* bodyguard resembles Oddjob about as closely as the typical policewoman resembles one of Charlie’s Angels. Brute strength, Mr. America muscles and a tough-guy demeanor *may* get you a \$4-an-hour job as a bouncer in a cheap bar, but these attributes alone will get you nowhere fast in professional bodyguard work.

Professionalism is the word that describes what is required of a man (or, in some cases, a woman) who seeks to earn a good living in the protective services industry as a security agent/consultant or bodyguard.

One needs only to ask: “*Who* hires bodyguards?” in order to understand that, in addition to the much-publicized martial-arts skills that are required of the professional, a good deal *upstairs* is needed, too. Prominent celebrities, business magnates and corporate VIPs and their families are the purchasers of bodyguard services, and the last thing that such an upper-class individual needs or desires is a sumo-wrestler type, lumbering conspicuously along while he takes his kids for a stroll in Central Park.

What, specifically, *is* required of a professional bodyguard? First of all, remember that good training is important, but all the training in the world will not “take” on the wrong candidate. Some people have a natural aptitude or talent for art, medicine, teaching and so on — some have a natural proclivity for bodyguard work.

In order to qualify for a career as a professional bodyguard, this self-test provides a good prescreening survey — if you answer all of the following questions honestly.

1. Are you of good moral character, with a higher-than-average degree of integrity? (If you are not, then sooner or later — if not at the outset of any attempt to obtain employment — it will be revealed. You simply will not be a desirable candidate for protecting anyone unless you are the type of individual who takes pride in his good character, his responsibility, his word and his obligations. People who employ bodyguards



PROFESSIONAL BODYGUARDS WANTED

are — quite literally — placing their lives in that person’s hands!)

2. Do you have any addictions to narcotics, drugs or alcohol? (If you do, these will disqualify you. Your mind must always be sharp, alert and ready for anything. An occasional cocktail or glass of beer is no problem, but if you are a “drinker” you will not make it as a pro in bodyguard work.)

3. Have you any record of criminal activities, or convictions for any offenses, other than minor traffic violations? (A criminal record is disqualifying. The sensitive nature of the work demands that a professional’s record be clean, and that

he retain the complete confidence of those to whom he is selling his services.)

4. Are you physically fit, and in generally-perfect health? (While most of a bodyguard’s job does *not* require physically-demanding or strenuous exertions, sometimes the going can get rough. A basically healthy body, free of handicaps and impairments, chronic illnesses, etc., is the foundation upon which the physical fitness and job skills required in bodyguarding are built.)

5. Do you have acute hearing and excellent eyesight? (Every sense must be highly tuned when on assignment, and the bodyguard’s eyes and ears — as well



First view of U.S. Secret Service agents on Presidential protection duty with President Reagan in motorcade. Note how agents maintain contact with vehicle and how they all maintain unending visual scan of surrounding crowd. Business suits are the bodyguard's "uniform." Photo: U.S. Secret Service

No Oddjobs Need Apply

by Bradley J. Steiner

as his intuitive "sixth" sense — are his most important "antennas" in perceiving the subtle warning signs of a possible crisis. Wearing glasses does not necessarily disqualify you, though it is best if you do not need glasses. With eyeglasses, your vision should be correctable to 20/20. Under no circumstances is notably poor sight acceptable.)

6. Are you disciplined, patient and thorough? (These are intangibles, but no less important than physical fitness and good eyesight. Laxity may lead to a one-time *fatal* mistake. Impatience leads to foolish oversights, bungling and stupid errors — none of which can be tolerated

in the critical profession of guarding human life. Often, the bodyguard is required to be in places and with people he may not personally like. He must be disciplined enough to deal tactfully with unpleasant situations. Immaturity and whining have no place in his makeup.)

7. Are you able to perceive subtle characteristics about people you meet — ones not entirely obvious on the surface? (This means more than being a good judge of character. Anything — repeat *anything* — even remotely "odd" about any individual who has not been "cleared up to the top" *must* trigger a warning signal when you're on the job.)

8. Can you work well with others? (A single bodyguard — for a person who needs real protection — is never adequate. The ability, therefore, to work with a capable team is necessary. Sometimes the members of that team may not be the easiest people to get along with.)

9. Are you an energetic person, generally capable of remaining at peak working efficiency throughout a long day's tedious activity? (If you aren't, then don't hire yourself out as a bodyguard. Bodyguard work entails pressures, demands and activities that are not expected at any nine-to-five job!)

10. Are you courageous, but not reckless? (Be honest about this. We all like to *think* we're heroes — but in your heart of hearts you know how willing you really are to "lay it on the line" in a critical situation. Not wanting involvement with trouble — even to the point of running away — is not necessarily shameful or wrong, but it certainly is contrary to the requirements of protective services. Courage, incidentally, can be cultivated and developed — but if you don't have it in quantity now, wait until it becomes a conspicuous part of your character before hiring out as a bodyguard. Remember: "Courage" is a much-abused and misunderstood word. It is often confused with recklessness, what I call "macho-heroics" or blatant stupidity escalated into action. A macho idiot who will charge at the drop of a hat, or spring into combative action which he could safely avoid, is the last person on earth whom anyone wants to hire for protection. Avoidance, cool, rational judgment, the ability to maneuver around trouble and the good sense to understand when a possible hot situation may be in the making — these are the basic tactics of the professional bodyguard. If you like to fight, enjoy trouble, like daredevil activity and generally prefer to "go where things are the hottest," then do yourself, and anyone who needs a bodyguard, a big favor: Get a job in Hollywood as a stunt man.)

11. Do you have a sharp, reliable, retentive memory? (This is imperative. Memory is one of the key attributes tested on the U.S. Treasury Department enforcement agent examination which is taken by anyone applying to the U.S. Secret Service. The Secret Service is *it* as far as professional protective-service organizations are concerned, in *case* you didn't know. A bodyguard has to be aware of details. He must note if things "seem different" now than they were

before and in the same place. If you're not quite sure whether that smudge was on the car door an hour ago, then don't count on saving a client's life — or your own — as an occupation.)

12. Are you afflicted with sea, air or car sickness? (Don't laugh. These are real problems for real people, and one can have these "illnesses" while being otherwise in perfect shape and good health. For obvious reasons, a professional bodyguard needs to be able to go anywhere via any means of transportation — without undue distress. You don't have to love motorboat racing, but if you drop to the floor in a state of agony at the first sway of a deck, you'll be of little use guarding a dignitary and his family on a yacht.)

The "ideal" bodyguard is, in addition to being a capable hand-to-hand fighter, small-arms expert, security professional, etc., a well-educated person. But education does not mean "schooling." There are uneducated dolts walking the earth with college degrees. Education may be the result of self-study, as well as the result of formal schooling.

A general education, in addition to professional training *per se*, is needed because the professional bodyguard

travels in generally well-educated, upper-class circles. He attends functions, parties and other activities with persons who are upper-echelon business and government leaders, as well as professional people. This point needs to be stressed: No business magnate, dignitary or celebrity is going to select his bodyguard "by the pound." Muscles and

brains are necessary to get ahead in this career.

All candidates for appointment as special agents with the Secret Service *must* have a college degree or an equivalent in college-level study and law-enforcement work experience. Beyond that, all candidates are judged in an in-depth interview that grades their bearing

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bradley J. Steiner's books, courses and lectures are known worldwide. Among his more than two dozen major published works are *Below the Belt! Unarmed Combat for Women*, *The Tactical Skills of Hand-to-Hand Combat*, *The Tactics of Combat Handgun Shooting* and *Close Shaves! A Manual of Razor Fighting*.

Steiner is the president of Survival-Defense International, an organization founded to teach and propagate his COMBATO (Jen DoTao) System and all aspects of effective self-defense, psychophysical training, close-combat and counter-terrorism. Steiner is president of the Interna-

tional Stick and Knife Fighting Association (Berlin, Germany).

Steiner holds a 5th Degree Black Belt, and has been employed professionally as a bodyguard on a number of occasions. He also provides instruction to others in the field. His clients include protective service and investigative personnel, as well as military and police officers.

For more information about Bradley J. Steiner's courses, publications and unique services, contact him directly at: Survival-Defense International, P.O. Box 9612, Phoenix, AZ 85068.

—S. Max

BODYGUARD WEAPONS

The sidearm bears the same relationship to the modern professional bodyguard that the sword bore to the Samurai warrior, the "hired gun" of feudal Japan. It is his basic and most important single weapon.

A professional bodyguard wears his gun *at all times* when on duty. He never, if he is worth any part of the fee he charges his clients, permits that weapon to get farther away from him than arm's reach — even in the bathroom!

The traditional weapon of U.S. Secret Service agents has been the Smith & Wesson Model 66 revolver in 2½-inch barrel and round butt. Recently, the newest Smith & Wesson stainless revolver — the Model 65 in 3-inch barrel and round butt — has been replacing the 66. Designed at the request of the FBI, this gun is considered a real winner. Both of these

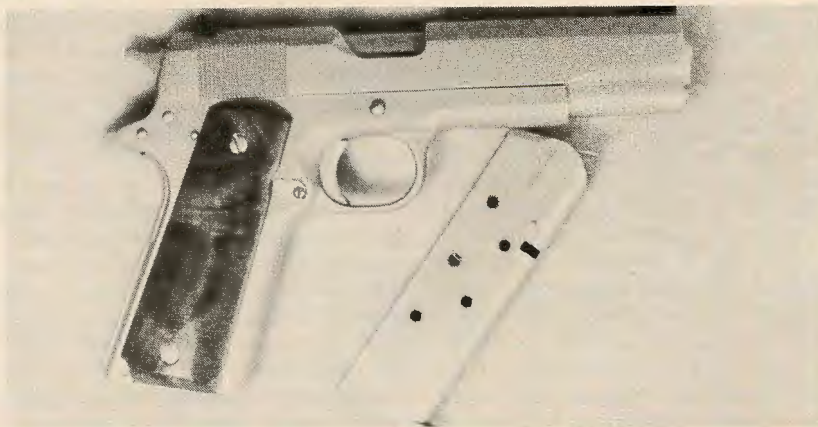
revolvers are reliable, proven weapons. Even though a stainless revolver retails for more, it costs less in the long run. Since the bodyguard's weapon is usually worn close to the body, it *must not* be susceptible to corrosion. Carbon-steel guns will have to be finished with nickel-plating, hard chrome, Armoloy®, or Teflon.®

If you prefer an auto pistol, my own hands-down choice is the Colt .45 ACP, either the Commander or full-house Mark IV Government Model. For continuous wear and reliable, heavy-duty stopping power, these are both excellent guns. I have added Herrett's smooth wood-panel

grips and a simple autogrip adapter to my own Commander. The adapter aids in control of rapid-fire, without in any way making the piece less concealable or adding to its weight. The full-house Colt Government Model in .45 ACP is perfect when most of the assignment involves sitting, driving or brief escort service.

A powerful, reliable handgun is superior to every other type of handheld weapon in close combat. The professional bodyguard understands that the finest knife-fighter or stick fighter can be dispatched in a half second flat by a trained handgunner and chooses his sidearm accordingly.

—B.J.S.



Author's full-house Colt Government Model in .45 ACP has flat mainspring housing, beveled magazine well, relieved ejection port, speed safety, pinned grip safety, King-Tappan combat sights and Herrett's grips. Fully Armoloyed® to make it utterly resistant to corrosion. Photo: Bradley J. Steiner



Federal agent demonstrates proper position for firing submachine gun, in this case Thompson .45 caliber. Secret Service agents prefer Uzi 9mm SMG for assignments — but they are competent with many weapons, including foreign models. Photo: U.S. Secret Service

and their appearance — not because these factors contribute to the Service's efficiency in beating counterfeiters, but because they — like general education — contribute to the agent's ability to blend in well with those people with whom he will associate while assigned to protective services — including the White House detail.

In many instances knowledge of a foreign language may be required — and at a level higher than college-course proficiency. A Secret Service agent or a CIA officer may attain the essential mastery at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif. Private individuals would benefit through tape courses and intensive study.

A clear, pleasant speaking manner and good command of the language are essential. Grunting and nodding look great in movies, but no one with any sense hires a bodyguard who is an illiterate muscleman.

It takes a lot to be a professional bodyguard. If you are a basically good person with a good general education who desires to be a bodyguard, what study program and training are required?

Probably the best way to obtain good professional training is to go to work for the U.S. Secret Service, the U.S. Marshal's Office or a security division within one of our armed services. Skills acquired in the FBI, the CIA and many larger law-enforcement agencies may relate to bodyguard training — but I

would not join the police or the FBI because I wanted to be a bodyguard.

By obtaining your experience with an agency like the Secret Service, you get the benefit of cost-free training of the finest quality. Also, you are well-paid, work with the finest-caliber men and women and enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that your efforts are being put to a genuinely good use which serves the best interests of your own country. After five or more years with such an agency, you can pretty much write your own ticket in the private sector.

There is also much to recommend obtaining your training through one of the armed services, as an alternative to the Secret Service, if you can get into security assignments that ensure training suitable to professional bodyguarding.

Finally, there are bodyguard academies. These are springing up all over America, in response to private industry's demands for trained security agents and executive-protection specialists. Naturally, these schools vary in quality. After carefully researching some of the more prestigious, I have come to the conclusion that most of these schools offer, at best, an introductory sketch of what is required of a professional bodyguard. However, for a person with no military, law-enforcement or government-service background (and for someone determined to get into bodyguard work who refuses to enter any form of civil or government service first), these schools offer two valuable things:

1. A chance to get some sort of planned, organized training in subjects that are not that readily available elsewhere. A person who goes through one of the bodyguard schools will gain at least a smattering of familiarity with things he must know before someone will pay him for his services.

2. A certificate specifying that he has completed the course. It is not really indicative of much, without military or law-enforcement experience, but it sure beats having *nothing*.

The bodyguard academies that I have researched run courses which last from a week to about 10 days. They are expensive, but, for someone totally unfamiliar with the "skills of the trade," they are probably worth the cost.

Brochures and advertisements for the bodyguard and executive-protection academies are spectacular, impressively written and often dramatically illustrated. But remember: It is what you can learn that is important — not the glamorous photos or the size of the claims. After graduating from a 10-day course in a bodyguard academy, you may feel that you're ready to take on a terrorist assault singlehandedly — but this is a bit unrealistic. The U.S. Secret Service takes four solid months to give its agents basic training for their careers — and that's only the beginning. Ongoing seminars and courses, as well as continual follow-up training, are provided to all agents — much more than any 10-day crash course can give.

Subjects like unarmed combat, physical fitness, handgun and other firearms training, special high-proficiency driving skills and team tactics must not only be learned — they must be maintained, by continual practice and personal application to ongoing drill. In organizations like the Air Force Security Police or the Secret Service, this is not much of a problem. Facilities are maintained for personnel, and their continued use of those facilities is encouraged.

The private individual, however, will find his training is up to him! Following graduation from a brief program at a bodyguard academy, he must: a) seek further instruction and training at much more advanced levels in the required subjects; b) continue to train and develop those skills. There is no other way to attain — and maintain — true professionalism. And *professionalism* is what clients pay for.

Second view of U.S. Secret Service agents guarding President Reagan at motorcade. Note agent at rear is looking up. Presidential car is specially-built to Secret Service specs. Note running boards, and agent seated in rear of car. This is the *back-up* vehicle that always follows the President's car. Agent seated in car is holding Uzi. Photo: U.S. Secret Service



A professional bodyguard must master the following areas:

1) Every person involved in protective services should "know the enemy" — a good background in the overall terrorist threat and an understanding of violent criminal activities are necessary.

2) Physical training. Good, tough physical training is needed. First, a person needs to develop a perfectly-fit, conditioned and strong body — and to maintain it.

3) Unarmed combat. Although having a black belt in judo or karate is highly desirable, it is not essential — but the bodyguard must be able to fight effectively and well. He can learn this in about eight or nine months by attending a good, practically-oriented combat-martial-arts academy. In my own System of COMBATO, for example, a person achieving the rank of green belt (usually attained in nine months with daily, hard training) would be generally more effective in a street encounter or attack situation than are most black belts who have been trained in classical methods. Disarming, attack techniques, the principles of release work, and perhaps some control tactics are what is needed.

4) Unconventional weapons and tactics. Know how to fight with a knife or stick, how to use ordinary easily obtainable items as lethal implements, when necessary.

5) Firearms. A bodyguard needs excellent proficiency with handguns, shotguns, rifles and, occasionally, with sub-machine guns. This training is crucial. There is no way either to "karate" himself or his client out of a surprise terrorist attack or kidnapping attempt. Firearms are absolutely necessary. This does not mean that the bodyguard must become a competitive shooter, but he must achieve and maintain a functional, combative capability with his firearms. For the handgun, he must be able to respond instantly to attacks at distances of seven to ten yards or less, and have excellent skills at aimed fire, when time, light and cover permit such shots to be made. He must have comparable proficiency with the shotgun and rifle and countersniping *ability* is often desirable.

6) Special driving skills. A bodyguard should not agree to work as a chauffeur-bodyguard. However, if he is employed as a driver within a protective team, that is another story. Evasive driving, defensive and counter-ambush maneuvers are

essential skills for the bodyguard, who should also be generally familiar with armored vehicles and cars, their capabilities, handling peculiarities, etc.

7) Emergency First Aid/CPR. This can all be learned absolutely free (except for the cost of texts and materials — about \$10-\$15) from the American Red Cross. Check the Yellow Pages for the chapter in your city. No one should have to pay a school to learn first aid. Remember that a bodyguard's purpose is to save and protect lives, which may mean administering CPR or lifesaving at the beach. Besides the standard first aid, a bodyguard must know how to deal with gunshot wounds, stabs, etc. The Red Cross's facilities are excellent, as are its teachers. They certify you, and they have had more experience in teaching their subject than all of the bodyguard schools in the world.

8) Security planning and procedures/risk analysis, etc. This includes such subjects as electronic security and alarm systems and so on.

Other subjects may be necessary from time to time for various assignments: bomb search and disposal, electronic surveillance, building search and clearance, convoy tactics, ambush and counterambush, SCUBA, etc. Bear in mind that many of the subjects with which a bodyguard needs to be familiar cannot be mastered without a really thorough, professional course. One cannot learn explosive ordnance disposal in a one- or two-day "crash" course. A brief introductory course can introduce the subject, not make a neophyte proficient in it. This is a good principle to remember.

After training, the bodyguard must maintain a professional image. He must wear modern business attire and fit in with a group of executives, be able to converse on world events and be good company on an outing. Such an individual will draw \$1,000 a week or more for his services. Occasionally a huge man with karate-callouses on his knuckles is required. But more often than not, he isn't. A trim, well-trained person of normal appearance can, with training, fight just as well as the big guy, and he's a lot better to have around — at least from the standpoint of most executives.

One conspicuous exception to the above principle is in celebrity protection. Here, a big man with lots of muscle and plenty of hand-to-hand ability is often preferred. But the situation here does not compare to executive protection. A bodyguard for celebrities needs to keep fans and whackos alike away from his client, since either category of individual might harm him. He needs to fend off groups — physically — and he needs to be ready to tackle wise-cracking drunks who attack the Big Name out of jealousy or envy.

Okay. Now you've got an idea of what bodyguarding requires. If you still think it's for you, check out the establishments which offer training along the lines of what you'll require.

Now you've got all the leads you need to get started — if that's what you want to do — in bodyguard work.

It's exciting, sometimes dangerous, and very, very much in demand. Good luck! 突

CHILE AIR SHOW



Text & Photos
by Jim Graves

IT'S billed as Latin America's biggest air show and until the Falklands' war came along the Feria Internacional del Aire in Santiago, Chile, was one of the best places to see just how well and to what extent nations in South America are arming themselves these days.

Nearly 200 manufacturers from all around the world went to the FIDA '82 show, where visitors and buyers had the opportunity to see some of the latest in weapons, delivery systems, electronics, communications and support gear of a military nature.

Among the visitors were SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown, Managing Editor Jim Graves and Contributing Editor Ralph Edens.

Such notables as Bell Helicopter, Bendix, Boeing, Boeing Vertol, British Aerospace, British Hovercraft, Dornier GmbH, Fokker B.V., Krupp GmbH, Hughes, IAI Israel Aircraft, Lockheed, Mitsubishi and Sikorsky were at the show with a bewildering array of products — but the three most interesting observed by the SOF contingent were turned out by smaller and less well-known companies.

In the Squad Automatic Weapon field, Chartered Industries of Singapore drew a lot of interest at the show with its 5.56mm Ultimax 100, a late entry and a very light one at 6.51 kilograms with a fully-loaded 100-round drum magazine.

In the area of exciting concepts, Buddy Head's MGS-101 gunship drew our interest. Head, president of SeaHawk Industries, Inc., (10772-74 S.W. 190th St., Miami, Fla.) designs and manufactures ultralights.

Ultralights, for those who have not had the chance to see one, are a step backward in aviation since they are light, low-powered, slow-flying, thin-skinned aircraft. Imagine a big hang-glider with a motor and you have it.



SOF Contributing Editor Ralph Edens (left) and SOF Publisher Robert K. Brown (center) talk with Buddy Head, president of SeaHawk Industries, Inc., about his MGS-101 Ultralight Gunship, which Brown is sitting in. MGS-101 can carry payload of 500 pounds (including pilot). It can reach altitudes over 15,000 feet, flies at 55 miles-per-hour and can land in 100 feet and take off in 50. Head's company is pioneering use of ultralights in counter-insurgency warfare.

But they are also cheap (\$5,000 or so), easy to fly, can take off in 50 feet and land in 100, climb at 100 feet per minute, are almost undetectable by radar, will fold up into a bag two feet thick and 16½ feet long, and can be assembled out of the bag to a power-on state in 11 minutes. With a 58-inch propeller, the MGS-101 can do 55 miles per hour, reach altitudes where you need oxygen to get by and carry 500 pounds, including the pilot.

The MGS-101 obviously has a lot of drawbacks but in a counter-insurgency role its unique characteristics (cost, landing capabilities and quietness) also offer interesting advantages.

The third product the SOF staff saw and wanted you could call an oldie but goodie — the Pilatus PC-6 Turbo-Porter. *Jane's All The World's Aircraft* describes it as "a single-engine multi-purpose utility aircraft, with STOL



Tan See Heng, deputy general manager of Unicorn International, with Ultimax 100 5.56mm LMG manufactured by Chartered Industries of Singapore. The Ultimax 100 (about \$1,000), lightest SAW (Squad Automatic Weapon) on the world market, weighs 6.51 kilograms with fully-loaded 100-round drum magazine. It has cyclic rate of 500-540 rounds per minute and effective combat range of 800 meters. Its unique "Constant Recoil" concept makes the weapon exceptionally controllable in full-automatic fire.

characteristics permitting operation from unprepared strips under harsh environmental and terrain conditions."

What that translates into is that, during the 1960s and 1970s, the Pilatus Porter was the mainstay of the CIA and other intelligence operations for landing on poorly lighted runways, which were short with lots of bumps and frequently had dog-legs, in Laos and other points.

The Porter, as the crowd in Chile saw, is some airplane with its stall speed of 51 miles-per-hour and huge ailerons — 41.2 square feet on a wing whose span is just under 50 feet.

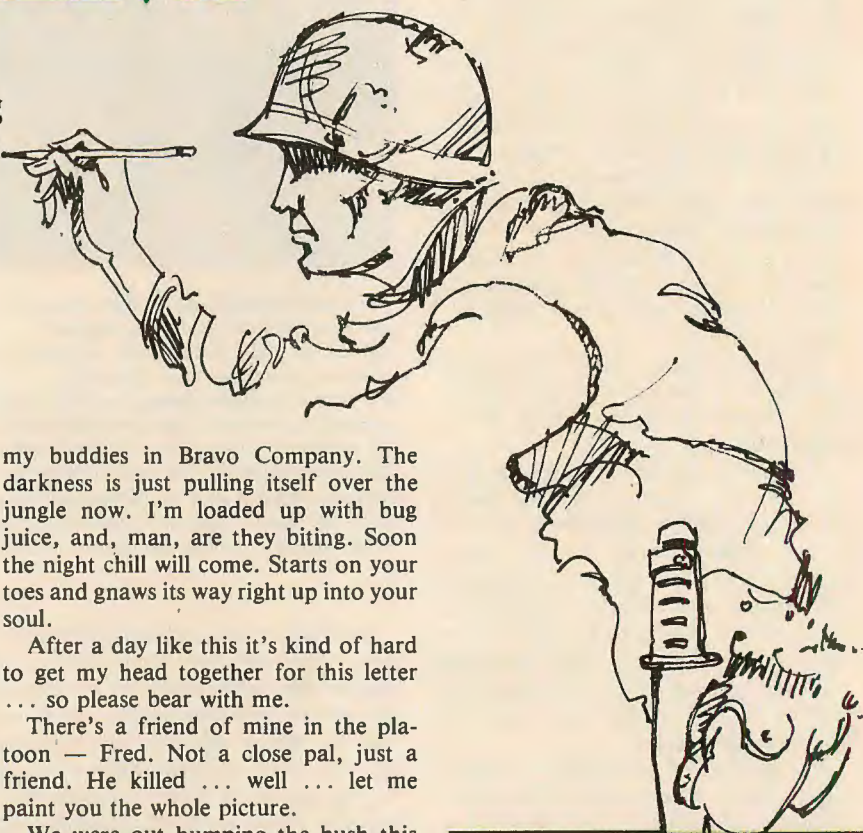
It has probably made about as many unscheduled stops as any airplane in the world and some of the old Air America (the CIA's not-so-secret air force) types will tell you stories about the Pilatus Porter that sound like pipe dreams.

Odds are the stories are true and factual. The Porter's that kind of airplane. ✕

Postmark: Free

LETTER FROM 'NAM

by Sgt. Ken Young
& Leo Budnick, Jr.



The incidents described in Sgt. Young's letter took place in the vicinity of Kim Gao hamlet, Quang Ngai Province, I Corps, Republic of South Vietnam.

October 15, 1969
DEROS 249

AL, How's everything back in the world? Raking up those leaves yet? Care to make a little exchange? You and your rake for me and my M16? Only kidding.

Connecticut must be beautiful now. All those brilliant autumn colors splashed over the yards and woods. Nothing like that here ... just green. Army green and 'Nam green, that's all I ever see. Hot and dry all day, chilly and damp all night. And that same monotonous jungle green everywhere.

Hey, how about those Amazing Mets! Putting our Yanks to shame. Dad's letter mentioned you got a bonus at work. Not bad, big brother. Dad seems to be getting into some heavy stuff with his foreman down at the plant. You know how cranky and uptight he gets about being pressured.

Pressure. Had quite a day here with

my buddies in Bravo Company. The darkness is just pulling itself over the jungle now. I'm loaded up with bug juice, and, man, are they biting. Soon the night chill will come. Starts on your toes and gnaws its way right up into your soul.

After a day like this it's kind of hard to get my head together for this letter ... so please bear with me.

There's a friend of mine in the platoon — Fred. Not a close pal, just a friend. He killed ... well ... let me paint you the whole picture.

We were out humping the bush this morning in full packs. A regular I-Corps picnic; 105 degrees in the shade. Around 0900 hours our company arrived at its AO (area of operations to you) and set up day laager. That's where the main part of our outfit would be spending the day. Our coordinates were set up on a tree line between the paddies and the mountains, maybe four or five clicks from the hootches of Kim Gao.

Our platoon broke up into four squads. Six GIs to a squad. One lucky squad would get to remain back at CP (command post). Mine? Negative. It was search-and-clear time for us. Five or six

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Leo Budnick, Jr. is a free-lance writer. Sgt. Ken Young served in the 11th Light Infantry Brigade of the Americal (23rd) Division as an infantry platoon sergeant in Vietnam in 1969-70. Young is presently a law student, and he also teaches special education at a school in Connecticut. Budnick and Young have published several articles on Vietnam, and they hope to publish an anthology in the near future.

hours of warding off jungle rot and gook sores. Bored by the routine and exhausted by the heat, we were supposed to rush to the aid of any squad that made contact with the enemy. John Wayne to the rescue! Except this ain't *Rio Bravo* and nobody here bears any resemblance to old Duke.

Anyway, this guy Fred is a Spec 4 with a reputation of sorts. Real gung-ho about the war, never lets anything bother him. He's "golden" too. Acts bold, some say crazy, whenever there's action — but never gets hurt. "Just doing the job the way it should be done," he boasted to me once. "No more and no less."

So his squad trudges out into the bush in spread-out formation, the idea being if one guy trips a booby-trap his buddies won't get hurt because of the distance between them. Not much consolation to the guy who finds his family jewels blown off.

They're slogging their way through a hedgerow — a dense row of bush and vegetation. Fred is second man in line. He's about 20 yards behind the point man. Plowing through to the other side of this hedgerow, the point abruptly finds himself eyeball to eyeball with two NVA regulars. Walking point themselves, maybe, for their unit snaking down from the mountains.

Winded and scared, I stumbled up the bank a few feet.

They're staring right at the point man — 30 to 40 feet from the top sight of his M16. A quick but fatal burst from an AK-47 rips the poor guy's face off. Now they spot Fred. They open up with their assault rifles. He lets go a clip from his M16. They hit Fred (tough to miss at that range) but the bullets seem to bounce right off him. That's because he's loaded up like a Mexican bandito. He's got belts of M60 machine-gun rounds crisscrossing his torso along with knives, grenades and web gear. This Pancho Villa outfit buys him a few precious seconds. That's all he needs.

Fred's M16 sends one of the NVA back to Buddha. The other one is fumbling around trying to shove another banana clip into his Russian-built AK-47. Got to be in a panic because Fred is still standing there! Only — Fred has to reload, too. The race is on. One of them is going to be quick, and one of them is going to be dead.

But Fred is just too "golden" for this sucker. Without a moment's hesitation,

he runs up to this NVA and butt-strokes him in the jaw with his rifle. He pummels the stunned bastard to the ground and beats him to death, using his M16, his boots and his fists.

A few seconds later, all hell breaks loose around him and Fred scrambles back to his squad unhurt. They get raked and pinned by AK-47 fire and .30-caliber machine-gun rounds. They answer with M16s, an M79 and the squad's only M60 machine gun, but they're outnumbered and in trouble. A desperately whispered radio call bounces back to CP, requesting assistance.

Here's where I come in. My squad is closest so we get the call. Fred had radioed CP that those two NVA were toting full rucksacks. Could indicate a major troop movement. We're ordered to outflank them. That means crossing a river nearly 30 feet wide.

Rifles over our heads, we wade across, one at a time. The river is turbid and tricky. One wrong step could take me under. The water rushes around my armpits. The muddy bottom sucks and pulls at my feet. Winded and scared, I stumble up the bank a few feet. I plop down belly first in the mud and look up. Just ahead I can make out mounds of uniformly arranged earth and brush. We're in a goddamn cemetery!

When everybody is across the river we move out. We gain about 50 yards when the NVA regulars start sending us their greetings. Their firepower is deafening. Those AK-47s can pop off 600 rounds per minute. Ears ringing, we burrow down into the damp dirt like moles tunneling for home. Forced flat on our faces, mired in the muck. Some rescue.

Bullets are splashing in the puddles and spanking the fertile, wet soil of the cemetery. Urging the living to join the dead.

Not me! Eyes shut tight and mouth spitting earth, I push my M16 up above my head and just let her rip. Hope you get lucky, baby.

The fire fight is intense and concentrated. We can't really see who we're shooting at. So often here in the boonies the enemy is like a ghost — amorphous and invisible.

We can't call for artillery support since right now we're close enough to the NVA to be family. So like an answered prayer, we get help from above. CP calls in helicopter gunships. The chopper jocks had already been in the air.

We sweat and wait while the North Vietnamese pour it on us. But in the distance I can pick up the steady sound of the helos thumping through the sticky air. Wait a second! If those gunships come up strafing from our rear, we could get pulverized along with the NVA.

My bowels are rumbling. They're on us in a flash. I blink the dirt from my eyes and watch them swoop in from the side like seagulls scavenging at the beach. We're going to be okay.

The gunships make a few passes at tree-top level. Air-to-ground rockets explode and electrically-fired mini-guns whang away at the enemy positions. But just as suddenly as it started, it stops. Like a rain-shortened 4th of July fireworks. Then, only eerie silence and the final rush of adrenalin through the veins. After such pandemonium your ears have to adjust back to normal conditions.

Hand-to-hand combat is our pet bitch over here.

Only 20 minutes had gone by since we crossed the river. Only ... it seemed like 20 lifetimes.

We were all through for the day. Two other squads swept the AO. They could turn up just two NVA bodies. The two Fred had nailed. Nothing else. No weapons, no supplies. Battalion headquarters wouldn't be too happy.

It can really get a grunt pissed off. The high command likes to keep score. Add up the corpses. A complicated math problem with no real solutions. Seizing a village or taking some ground doesn't appear to matter because as soon as you pull out the enemy comes back. He's like a chronic dose of the clap that never seems to leave you.

I know it was different in Dad's war. WWII — "the big one." The enemy was in front of you and you beat the hell out of him. You took territory and you held it. But that was the good old days.

The point man in Fred's squad was our only KIA. We heard about Fred's kills from a guy in his squad who saw it all. Usually, Fred babbles on about his exploits to anyone who lends an ear. But this time he was being uncharacteristically reticent about it. I tried to get him to open up. "Just did a job," he muttered, turning away.

We're sprawled out now, taking it easy. Fred's not here. He's wandered off by himself somewhere. Hand-to-hand combat is our pet bitch over here. Our biggest fear. Wet-your-pants time. I guess it's got to do something to you. Damn, what doesn't this place do to you...

Funny, I'm a little scared and bothered about what happened to Fred, but I can't seem to focus any feelings on what I went through in that cemetery today.

My writing hand is starting to numb up. Must be the night chill *settling* in...

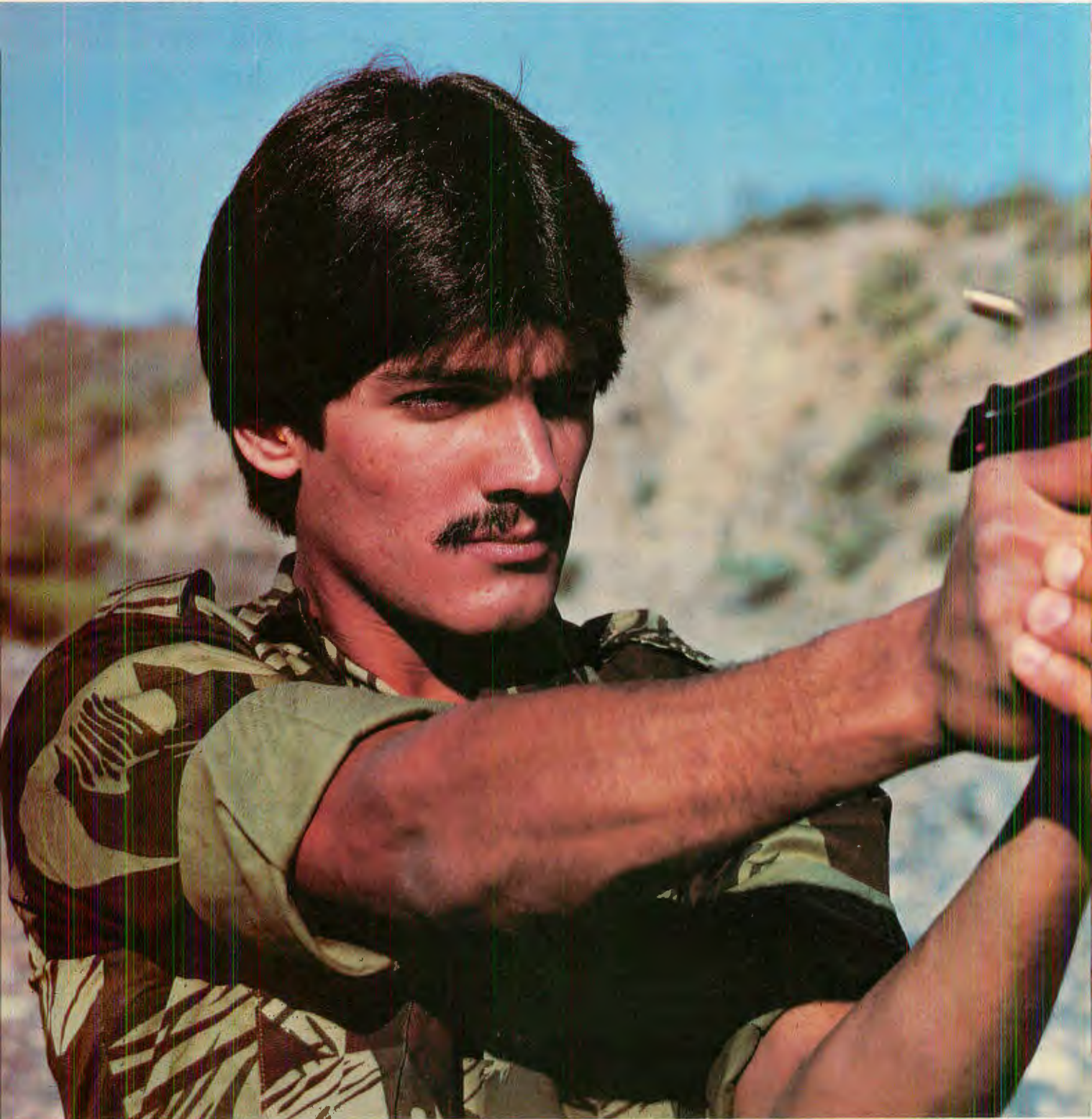
Listen, Al, make sure you write soon. Getting a letter over here is ... like a hug from home ... take care,

Kenny ✂

SON OF A WINNER

Beretta's 92 SB

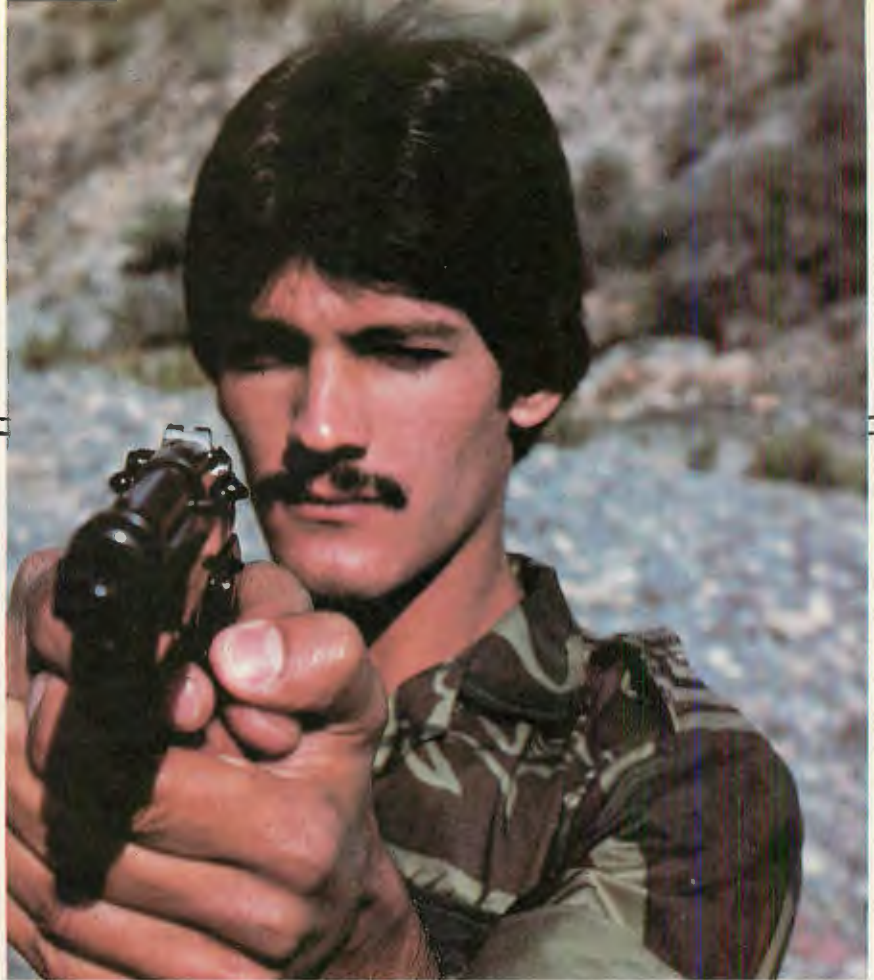
Text & Photos by Peter G. Kokalis



RIGHT: Alex Pappas displays business end of clean machined Beretta 92 SB.

LOWER LEFT: Thoroughbred Italian 9mm semi-auto in recoil, stripping another round from voluminous 15-round staggered box magazine.

LOWER RIGHT: Long barrel for velocity, long sighting radius for accuracy and convenient control placement characterize Beretta 92 SB.



CLEAR winner of the JSSAP trials (see "SOF Uncovers Sidearm SNAFU," SOF, June '82), the Beretta 92S-1 and its immediate successor, the 92 SB, are also quite clearly the descendants of noble lineage.

The Beretta 92 SB's unique slide, which is cut away at a point directly behind the front sight all the way back to where it becomes the pistol's breech, extending then from the firing chamber rearward, can be traced without interruption back to the Beretta Model 1915 blowback pocket pistol in caliber .32 ACP. It was, in fact, the salient

distinguishing characteristic of the famed Model 1934 Beretta in 9mm Corto (.380 ACP/9mm Kurz), which served as the official sidearm of the Italian army in World War II and a semi-official GI souvenir of that era. The open top of the slide obviates the need for an ejection port as such.

Knowing that most good designs are a blend of modest novelty and practically proven developments, Beretta has built the 92 SB on old foundations. While longer and more steeply angled, the 92 SB's magazine is modeled on the Browning Hi-Power

BERETTA 92 SB COMBAT AUTO

magazine. The Beretta's short recoil system uses a falling locking block which is driven downward to disengage the slide from the barrel and halt the rearward travel of the barrel. It more than vaguely resembles the operating principle of the Walther P-38 pistol.

The more specific origin of the 92 SB lies in the Beretta Model 1951SL pistol. The model 51 pistol is used by the Israeli, Egyptian, Italian and Nigerian armed forces. The Model 51 uses an eight-round box magazine, a push-through pin-type safety located at the top rear of the frame, and is single-action.

The Beretta Model 92 was placed into production in 1976. It featured a double-action trigger, 15-round magazine, a disassembly-latch release button, and an anodized aluminum frame.

The Model 92S followed shortly. It was generally the same as its predecessor except the safety was moved from the frame to the slide. When the safety is applied with the hammer cocked, the firing pin is deflected from the hammer head, the hammer released, and the connection between the trigger bar and the sear broken.

As a consequence of the JSSAP trials, Beretta altered the 92S in several significant ways, leading to the 92S-1 and finally the 92 SB.

The safety lever was elongated and placed on both sides of the slide to make the safety accessible with either hand. The magazine release button has been moved from the bottom rear of the grip assembly to the rear of the trigger guard where it can be pushed by the shooting hand's thumb. For left-handed shooters the magazine release button can be moved from the left to the right side of the frame.

The safety system on the 92 SB has been transformed: 1) There is now a half-cock position (this useless old feature simply refuses to die); 2) the new firing pin is inertial; 3) the manual safety disengages the trigger from the sear, and 4) a spring-loaded steel block limits the firing-pin travel. This mechanical firing-pin stop, located in the slide, is activated by a coil spring and deactivated at the last moment of

trigger travel by the trigger bar and a lever assembly. This last safety feature (which distinguishes the 92 SB from the earlier 92S-1) ensures that the pistol cannot fire unless the trigger is pulled. It is reminiscent of the Schwartz firing-pin safety that was occasionally installed on Colt Commercial Model 1911 pistols during the mid-1930s. The slide of a 92S pistol I examined (only 1576 digits lower than the serial number on my 92 SB) was already milled in apparent anticipation of this device.

There are further minor differences between the 92S and the 92 SB. The front and rear sights on the 92 SB have white dots to improve visibility. The grip assembly on the 92 SB has been grooved front and rear. The recoil-spring guide rod is steel hard-chromed on the 92S and anodized aluminum on the 92 SB. The hammer pivot pin is now held in place by the enlarged left grip panel of the 92 SB since it had a pronounced tendency to walk out on the 92S. The magazine retention system has been improved on the 92 SB but its magazines still work in the 92S. However, 92S magazines cannot be used in the 92 SB.

The machine work, fitting and finish of the Beretta 92 SB are outstanding. How refreshing it is, in this day of investment castings, tool marks, sloppy fit, burrs and poor finish, to see and feel the careful craftsmanship of the 300-year-old Pietro Beretta company.

Second-round target and sight alignment is damned quick as felt recoil is low.

The specimen I received from the Beretta U.S.A. Corp. (Dept. SOF, 17601 Indian Head Highway, Accokeek, MD 20607) could be faulted in only one area. Its scratchy seven-pound single-action trigger pull ground enamel off my teeth like the dragging of chalk across a blackboard. This was soon remedied by Burke C. Hill, Jr., whom many now consider to be the premier combat pistolsmith in the Southwestern United States. With a clean, crisp-as-ice four-pound let-off, the Beretta 92 SB now shoots as good as it looks.

Two 92 SB pistols were used in SOF's test and evaluation, mine and that of a good friend, Robert H. Hall. More than 800 rounds of assorted ammo have, as of this writing, been run through the two pistols without a single malfunction that can be attributed to the weapons.

There were three failures to hold open after the last round was fired.

However, the 92 SB's slide stop is positioned further rearward and requires far less pressure to release than the Colt 1911A1, since it is merely spring-loaded and not connected to a barrel link. Because the thumbs ride high when using the correct Weaver hold and stance, those with large hands will find their thumbs positioned right on top of the slide stop. This, of course, explains the failure to hold open. Slight modification of the grip fixed everything.

Ball ammunition used in the test included Finnish Lapua, Federal, Czech and handloads incorporating the Hornady SWC jacketed bullet developed in conjunction with the JSSAP trials. The Czech ammo required second hammer hits about eight to 10 percent of the time in Hall's 92 SB. The extremely hard primers in the Czech cases are difficult to ignite in many pistols and will on occasion even cause problems in submachine guns with nonfixed firing pins, such as the MP40.

Both pistols shot six to eight inches high at 25 meters. This will require a tricky alteration as the firing-pin stop is directly in front of the rear sight and in its farthest upward position is already almost in line with the bottom plane of the rear sight picture. In other words, the rear sight notch cannot be lowered very much more.

It's nice to see a rounded trigger guard again. The recent fetish for squared trigger guards has been carried too far and serves only to impede instruction in the proper Weaver two-handed hold.

The magazine-release button is now conveniently located and the magazines fall freely away for ease in speed-loading. It's a shame the magazine well is not beveled, but this is easy enough for a competent pistolsmith to correct.

The thumb safety is more difficult to reach and operate, without changing the grip, than that of the M1911A1, but the double-action feature and the firing-pin stop allow a round to be carried safely in the chamber with the hammer down. The manual safety is thus almost a redundancy. The right-hand safety lever on Robert Hall's 92 SB started to loosen during the first shooting session. Replacement of the small roll pin which fastens the lever to the safety will alleviate this minor irritation.

The loaded-round indicator, actually just a red mark on the extractor, is of dubious value and small consequence. Those not accustomed to such a feature will simply ignore it.

Stripping and reassembly are effortless with the Beretta's novel disassembly latch. Just press the disassembly latch's release button (after emptying the pistol) and rotate the latch counter-clockwise until it stops. Pull the entire slide group forward and separate

from the frame. Reassemble in the reverse order without worrying about aligning the slide stop with the barrel link while the recoil spring flies into your eye, as with the M1911A1.

The walnut grip panels are best used by those with large hands. Others will find the thinner profile offered by the black plastic grip panels more to their liking.

The Beretta 92 SB is pleasant to

shoot. The heft, feel and balance are superb, and hit probability and accuracy are high. The grip-to-frame angle is correct and target acquisition is really fast. Second-round target and sight alignment is damned quick as felt recoil is low. This is the first double-action self loader I have fired where the single-action second round consistently printed close to the double-action first round. *Hallelujah.*

The 92 SB is swiftly becoming popular with IPSC shooters here in the Southwest. This is sure to continue. Its predecessor's (92S-1) first-place position in the JSSAP trials was entirely justified. Beretta's great new 92 SB pistol will eventually prove its excellence in performance upon demand in the life-and-death situations for which it was so well designed. ✕



ABOVE: Full-open top of 92 SB slide eliminates malfunction from ejection port restriction. **LEFT:** Ambidextrous safety allows strong-or weak-hand use, right side view shows exposed ejector. **RIGHT:** Falling block lock assembly shows debt to Walther P-38. **LOWER LEFT:** Lever to

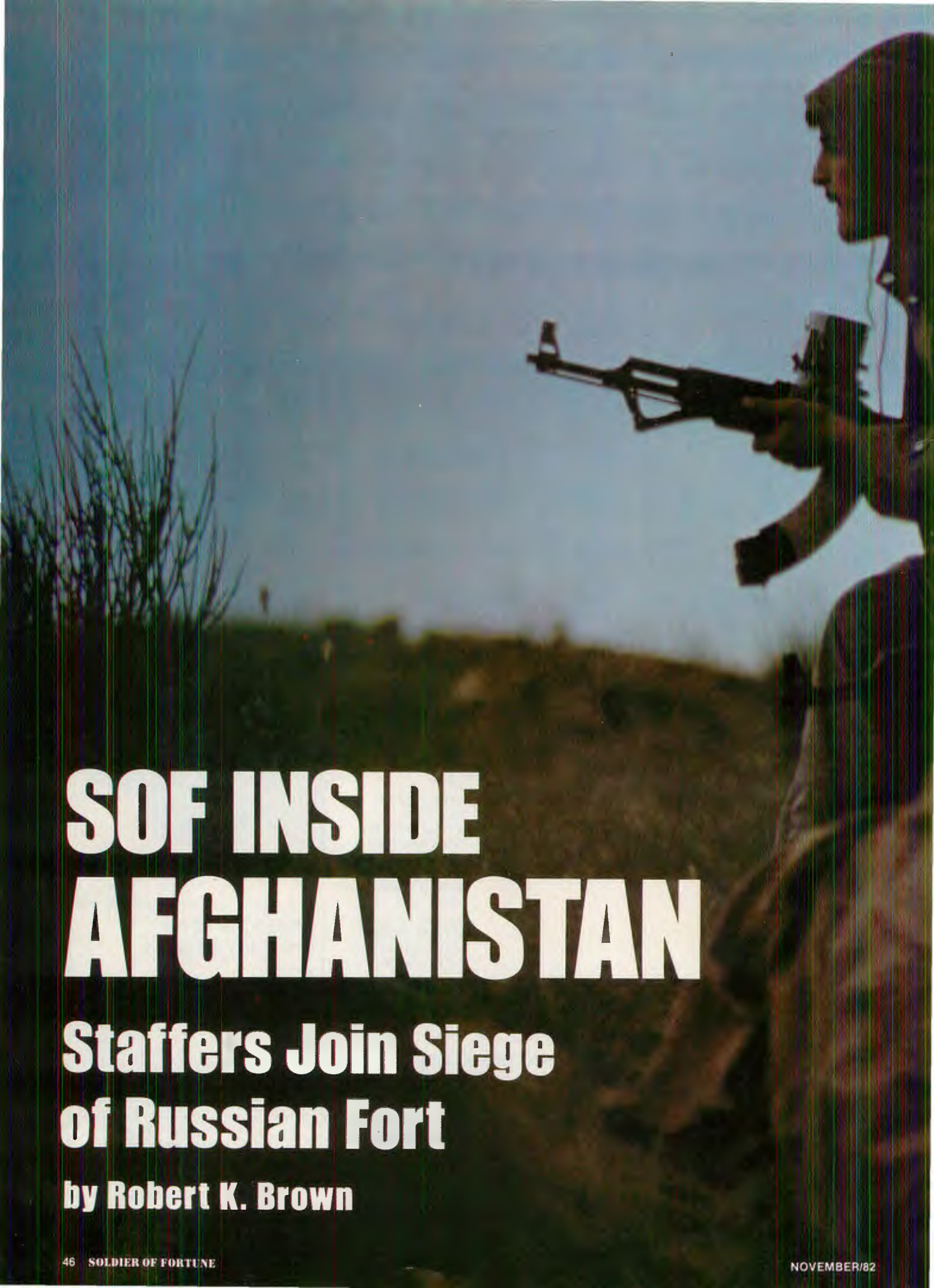


right of hammer trips firing-pin stop in slide. **BELOW:** Left-side closeup with disassembly lever, hold-open lever, M1911-style magazine release and firing-pin-block safety lever.



BERETTA 92 SB SPECIFICATIONS


WEIGHT:
(with empty magazine)..... 34.5 oz.
OVERALL LENGTH:..... 8.54 inches
HEIGHT:..... 5.39 inches
WIDTH:..... 1.45 inches
BARREL LENGTH:..... 4.92 inches
CALIBER:..... 9mm Parabellum
OPERATION: Short recoil, semi-automatic; automatic; oscillating block locking system; exposed, double-action hammer
MAGAZINE: Staggered, 15-round
SIGHTS: White dot blade front, integral with slide; notched white dot fixed rear, dovetailed to slide; sighting radius: 6.1 inches
PRICE: With black plastic grips: \$600.00
With walnut grips: \$620.00
DISTRIBUTOR: Beretta U.S.A. Corp., Dept. SOF, 17601 Indian Head Highway, Accokeek, MD 20607



SOF INSIDE AFGHANISTAN

**Staffers Join Siege
of Russian Fort**

by Robert K. Brown



“The most exhilarating experience in the world is to be fired at with no effect.” — Winston Churchill during the Boer War

The most exhilarating experience in the world is to be fired at with no effect— and to fire back. — SOF Staff, Afghanistan 1982

“INCOMING,” I muttered to Coyne and a bunch of non-English-speaking Afghans who were preparing to drop another round into their obsolete British-made Mark 5 three-inch mortar. “I saw a flash in the fort.”

Nobody paid any attention. Coyne continued to swivel his video camera from the Russian fort under attack to the Afghan mortar crew and back. The Afghans simply milled around in their Boy Scout Jamboree attitude — fusing mortar rounds, observing the Russian fort and milling.

I shook my head and hunkered down next to a large rock to keep at least one side of my body protected.



A few seconds later, the whine of an incoming Russian mortar round reminded me that I didn't appreciate the sound any more than I did in Vietnam. Nor the results.

Crump! It hit 70 meters away. Obviously the Russians had their guns registered on our ridgeline. Nobody seemed perturbed — except me. The Afghans pointed at the plume of smoke where the round hit and laughed, adjusted their mortar — and continued to mill. Coyne continued to swivel. It was certainly a different way to fight a war.

A few days earlier, Coyne and I had linked up with Hashmat, the 36-year-old brother of one of the major leaders of the Islamic Unity of Afghanistan, while pursuing a number of projects in Pakistan.

Coyne had gone into Afghanistan before in December 1980 with Hashmatullah (Hashmat) Mojadedi, who was the brother of Sibghatullah Mojadedi, a principal leader of the Islamic Unity of Afghanistan Mujahideen, (see "SOF Staffer Inside Afghanistan," *SOF*, May '81) and had brought out the first Russian PFM-1 anti-personnel mine seen in the West (see "Exclusive: Another Successful Afghanistan Treasure Hunt," *SOF*, April '81).

We hadn't planned on a tour of the combat zone when we arrived in Pakistan this trip. But then Hashmat said, "I'm going to Afghanistan on a resupply mission and to make an estimate of the situation. It will be only a few days. Do you want to come?"

Coyne and I looked at one another, pondering . . .

Hashmat, noting our indecision, smiled and added, "We have a Russian fort surrounded and under siege. We are attacking every day."

ABOVE: SOF Staffer Jim Coyne blasts away with 12.7mm Model 38/46 DShK Degtyarev HMG. Coyne decided to take a break from video-taping. Photo: Robert K. Brown
UPPER RIGHT: Obviously, Coyne is enjoying fruits of his labor during his second trip into Afghanistan. Photo: Robert K. Brown



LEFT: Mujahideen prepare Chinese 82mm mortar-round fuses, primary cartridges and increment charges. Photo: Jim Coyne

Coyne and I continued to look at each other and decided, "Well, why not? Opportunities like this are few and far between." Furthermore, Coyne, who had 12 years experience as a TV cameraman before joining SOF, brought with him a video camera. Perhaps we could get some combat footage.

Back to the Khyber International Hotel in Peshawar where we started our pre-mission planning during dinner. Incidentally, dining in the Khyber International restaurant is a memorable experience.

Every meal you can choose a new item on the menu that you will never order again. Except for the two meatless days. When I asked Coyne, "Why meatless days?" he replied, "They don't know. It's been going on forever."

I was concerned about being arrested by Pak authorities as we tried to cross the border. Coyne had been arrested twice during his previous trips and it does screw up one's schedule. Hashmat, I felt, was being a bit cavalier in his dismissal of my insistence that we should dismount when we approached Pakistani border checkpoints and infiltrate around them on foot.

"No, no, just buy some Afghan clothes and, Brown, you dye your moustache and hair black. You'll look like a Pathan," he replied, naming the famous warrior tribe near the Khyber Pass.

The moustache would be no problem. But the hair, what hair? I finally settled on dyeing just the hair around the temples since my turban would cover the rest of my thinning pate.

After a day's delay due to vehicular problems, at

0600 hours we jumped in the back of a Jeep pickup, whose bed was covered by a canvas. Clad in our new clothes, we snuggled up to the back of the cab and four Freedom Fighters crowded in after us — with their Chinese Type-56 AK-47s.

For the next eight hours, we bounded over some of the most god-awful goat-track roads and through five checkpoints. No problem, fortunately, as Coyne and I feigned sleep, pulling our turbans down over our faces when the Pak guards casually inspected the interior of the truck.

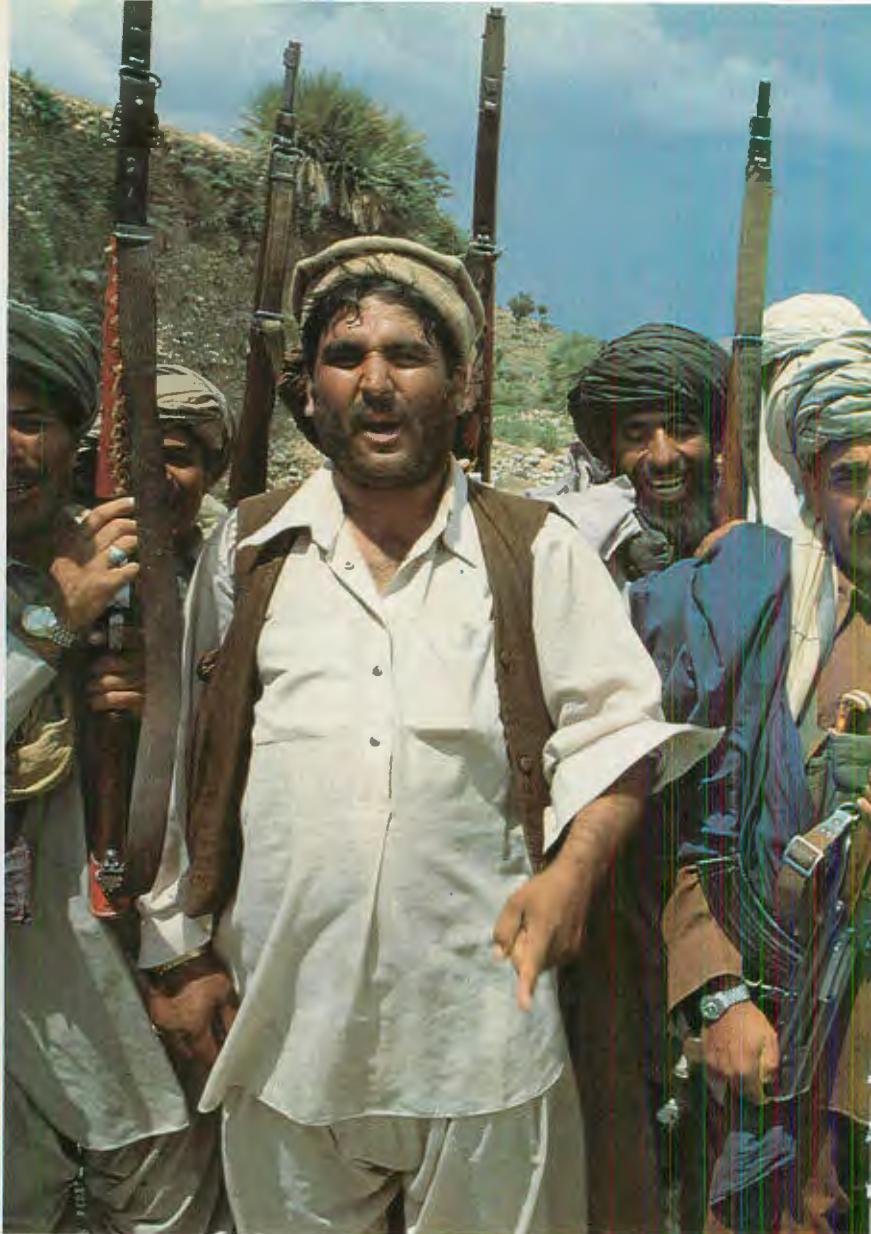
With the last heart-stopping checkpoint behind us, we cut from the main road onto a track. For another hour the truck lurched through featureless dark wilderness. No road was perceptible in the headlights. We stopped. Glittering against the silent black of night, stars clustered to form a domed ceiling above us, horizon to horizon. We were 1,000 meters from Afghanistan.

A large Bedford truck was parked to our right, a black silhouette in the night. A faintly lit, adobe, one-room hut was barely visible. We were greeted by shadowy figures in hushed, respectful tones. As Hashmat and the others settled in for a long night of discussion, Coyne and I laid out our bedding. We slept on reed cots, covered with warm, bright Afghan quilts against the chilly night air of the border.

The sunlight woke me at 0530. Twenty or more mujahideen were already off-loading the Bedford, decorated with elaborate designs and paintings. The truck sat heavily on its springs, weighted with arms and munitions.

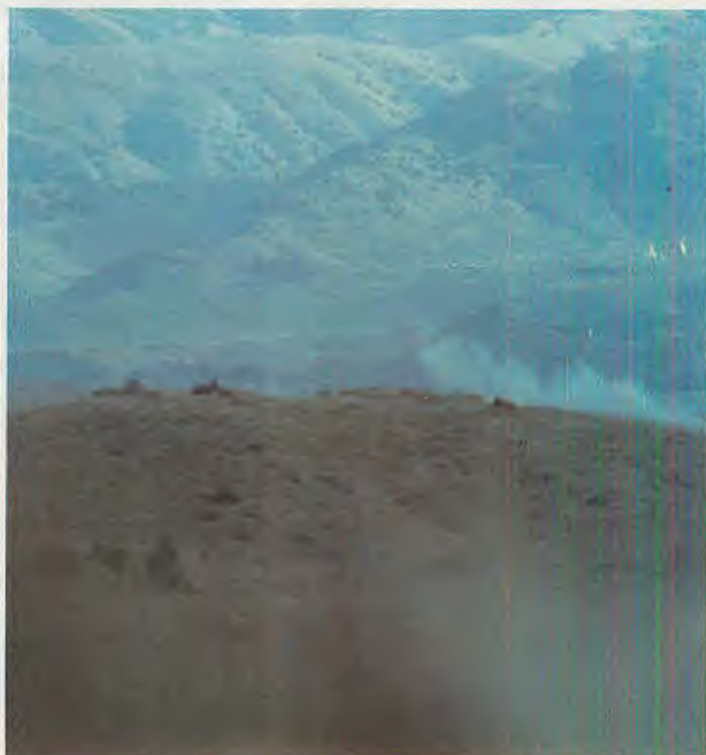
Coyne and I watched sleepily as the truck was painstakingly off-loaded. Ammunition, weapons and supplies destined for other mujahideen

RIGHT: Eighty to ninety percent of freedom fighters are still armed with Enfields. A few were armed with various model AKs and SKSs. Photo: Robert K. Brown
BELOW: Mortar round impacts near Russian fort under siege. Only 11 rounds were fired — a 10-day supply. Note lack of cover and concealment in AO. Photo: Robert K. Brown



guerrillas on the offensive inside Afghanistan were moved with deliberate slowness, hand-to-hand, from the truck to the ground. The driver watched and waited nervously next to his truck, anxious to leave. The pile of munitions grew.

Upon inspection, we found the weapons consisted of 10 recently manufactured "Enfield" rifles purchased in Darra, a tribal town in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan notorious for its arms bazaar.





The care package included a 7.62mm SGMB Goryunov light machine gun, still covered with cosmoline in its packing crate, with about 1,000 Chinese-manufactured incendiary/tracer rounds; cases of anti-tank mines with fuses; four or five dozen three-inch mortar rounds, circa 1957; 20-odd cases of caliber .303 British ammo; and the *piece de resistance* — two cases of linked-incendiary ammo for aircraft. The label on the latter stated it was manufactured in 1942 and was “not to be fired through synchronized machine guns after 1944”! I never figured out where that box came from.

With this they were taking on the Russian



Mortar crewman adjusts mortar bipod on Stokes-Brandt three-inch mortar introduced into British service in 1936. Though no longer manufactured, it is still used by some former Commonwealth countries. Photo: Robert K. Brown

army? But we had more revelations awaiting us.

We left the next day at 0900 with Hashmat and 14 of his security troops, armed with Enfields and Chinese Type-56 AKs. A camel had been loaded with a portion of the supplies and dispatched the preceding day. So it was like, “Let’s go on a Saturday-morning hike,” as we moved toward our objective.

As the hours passed, walking turned into trudging — up ravines and dry river beds covered with square billiard balls. By the end of our tour, we were convinced that when God, in all His ultimate wisdom, created the earth, He had taken all His surplus square 2 x 2, 3 x 3, and 4 x 4-inch rocks and scattered them liberally over Afghanistan. Or perhaps He knew we would be walking along those trails.

I kept expecting Mi-24 helicopter gunships to come roaring out of the sea-blue sky bringing death and destruction to SOF and friends. The Afghans seemed unconcerned — talking, bunched up and, once again, milling. Either they knew something we didn’t — or they simply didn’t care.

Inside Afghanistan, at about 1630 hours, we met a lookout who escorted us to our forward attack position — a ridge that had a single three-inch British Mark 5 mortar positioned in defilade about 30 meters short of the crest. One hundred meters to the right of the mortar, a Soviet DShK Degtyarev Model 38/46 12.7mm HMG poked its ugly snout toward the Russian fort.

“What the hell kind of war are they fighting?” I muttered to myself. I

could barely see the outline of a fort through my field glasses! It must have been 3,500 meters away. I was particularly confused since an intervening ridgeline was 1,500 meters closer. I later found out that they had fired from this ridge the night before, but had moved back one ridge because of the VIPs (that's us) who were going to be observing the attack.

I shook my head, puzzled about the Afghan military mind or what I perceived to be the lack thereof.

"Allah Akbar!" shouted the 30 Afghans as the mortar crew plunked a round down the tube. WHAM! The first round arced toward Ivan. The mortar crew raced to the ridge, then hunkered down to wait for the round to impact.

We waited and waited and waited.

Boroki, the leader and mortarman, mumbled to himself. I suspected bad ammo. Even though no aiming stakes were in evidence, they couldn't be that far off. Another round — nothing. Then another; again, nothing.

The mortar crew was disgusted; they stared at the useless ammo and cursed among themselves.

At the first mortar round from our group, another group of Afghans had opened fire on the Russians with a DShK 12.7mm. We heard its rhythmic "doom-doom" from the other side of the fort.

We had been told before the attack that the Russians would return fire with the DShK 12.7mm HMG first. In the gathering darkness the muzzle flash from the DShK was distinct. Unlike the mortar, the "Dashika" is a direct-fire weapon, not much could be done to hide the flash. The Russians followed up with a few mortar rounds of their own.

RIGHT: Profusion of PFM-1s scattered across trails makes one alert and careful — prone to follow in others' tracks. Photo: Jim Coyne
CENTER: Live Soviet PFM-1, air-developed anti-personnel mine. First photos of tan-colored version. Handling not recommended! Again note lack of cover and concealment. Photo: Jim Coyne
BOTTOM: Mujahid wounded by PFM-1 mine. Graphic example of why mines should be blown in place rather than by throwing rocks at them. Photo: Jim Coyne



I shook my head. The attack, such as it was, had lasted an hour with no results. But, happily, still no Mi-24s appeared in the sky though we were no more than 30 minutes by chopper from the Soviet airbase at Khost.

As dusk fell — and still no Mi-24s — we moved down to a safehouse located in the bottom of a narrow ravine four or five clicks from our firing position. The safehouse was a framework of branches covered by dried reeds.

Inside, a firepit dug into the ground fiercely burned the cardboard-mortar-round containers and provided the means to cook the freshly slaughtered lamb. As the light from the flames cast shadows on the walls of this primitive dwelling, we imagined ourselves tripping back through time — any time period during the last 2,500 years. The shadowed, gaunt, craggy faces of the turbaned Afghans could have been part of the Afghan forces that resisted Alexander the Great's invading army in 327 B.C., or the conquering Mongol armies of Genghis Khan in the 12th century, or Tamerlane in the 14th century, or the British incursions of the 19th century. Only the wristwatches and burning mortar-round containers indicated that we were in the 20th century.

Hashmat asked us, as honored guests, to sleep inside. However, looking at the terrain — as I caught up on my note-taking, using the baseplate of the three-inch mortar as a backrest — I figured that if the Mi-24s took a run through this valley, they would observe the baseplate that was propped up against the hootch's doorway and waste it.

Therefore, Coyne and I opted to sleep in the open, 50 meters from the hootch, giving us a bit of a chance if Ivan decided to snoop the following morning.

Not to worry — the only disturbance during the night came from a scraggly Afghan rooster tethered about three feet from my head. He obviously had his sense of time upset by jet-lag, mistaking 0300 hours for dawn instead of 0530 hours. His crowing disturbed what was, at best, an unsettled sleep. However, I was satisfied that the rooster was suitably chastised a few hours later — we ate him for lunch.

We broke camp and moved out toward our next attack position about 1400 hours the following day. Once again, a Boy Scout hike. As we moved across the 400-yard-wide valley floor in a gaggle I continually searched for cover and concealment. In vain, it turned out since there wasn't any. Apparently the Afghans simply don't worry about enemy choppers.

Granted, they had observation posts on prominent terrain features and ridgelines. However, their early-warning system (which consisted of Abdul yelling to Mohammed, "Helicopters are coming," who in turn would yell to Ismael, "The helicopters are coming," who in turn would yell to . . .) was not reassuring. Even though Coyne pointed out, "You can see a chopper much farther away than you can hear it," I still was not impressed. The Afghans had more confidence in their early-warning system than I did.

After a five-hour walk that covered at least 20 clicks, we arrived at our new attack position. The mujahideen had borrowed an additional three-inch mortar from another group because they were

dissatisfied with the previous one. Once again, the mortar position was located about 20 yards from the crest of the ridge on the reverse slope. At 1815 hours, to the cheers once again of "Allah Akbar!", the Afghans initiated a mortar attack.

Much better luck was ours tonight. The gunner, Boraki, bracketed the target with three rounds and put it on target.

Incoming once again. It was becoming interesting.

Another enthusiastic "Allah Akbar!" A bright flash — we got a secondary.

Shortly thereafter, another bright flash erupted from the main gun of a Soviet tank! The round landed about 100 meters from our mortar position, but only 10 meters from the heavy machine-gun position. Fortunately, a rock embankment protected the gunner, who did not interrupt his firing. The Soviets once again replied in kind.

After 30 minutes, we broke contact. We had run out of mortar ammunition even though we had fired only 11 rounds — the whole week's allocation!

The following morning, the mujahideen received an intelligence report that one of our rounds had landed on a Soviet mortar pit, killing the gunner and setting off a secondary. Not bad results for a lousy 11 rounds.

During the night, which we spent in another dry river bed, and the following day, I pieced

together a reasonable or at least understandable estimate of the situation. The Afghan resistance forces had the small Russian fort under siege and surrounded it for 41 days. The concept of operations was simple and had been used since the beginning of recorded military history — starve them out.

The Afghan resistance expected that when the Afghan puppet troops ran low on ammo and food, they would slit the throats of the Russian advisers and surrender. Two other Russian outposts in the same area had already suffered that fate in preceding months.

The nightly standoff attacks' primary purposes were to maintain pressure on the fort personnel and to prod the Soviets into returning fire — thus continuing to deplete Russian ammo reserves. Since the Soviets had their guns registered on our ridgelines but still fired only minimum rounds of counter-mortar fire, I gave the Afghans' assumption a fair amount of credibility.

The Afghans believed that no resupply by land was possible since all main approach avenues to the Soviet fort were under Afghan observation, whose blocking forces would attack any relief columns. The Soviets would not risk a chopper to resupply.

It seemed to me that if the Russians wanted to relieve the fort they could — if they committed sufficient air assets. I would think that a half a dozen Mi-24s could easily provide sufficient combat power to suppress any Afghan fire.

On the other hand, perhaps the Soviets felt it was not worth the effort. It's hard for us who have served in the U.S. military to believe that the Soviets could so callously write off their advisers. But in light of the fact that several reports had circulated of Russians destroying damaged Mi-24s with crews trapped inside to preclude military secrets from being compromised — perhaps not.

Ultimately, the mujahideen were unable to storm the fort because it was surrounded by a 200-meter mine field. They had insufficient artillery and no bangalore torpedoes with which to breach the minefield. Nor were funds available to purchase enough sheep to attempt to run livestock through the mines, a technique of questionable effectiveness.

Their starvation plan was not sophisticated, but it appeared to be working, and one has to make do with what is available — which obviously was not a hell of a lot. However, I certainly did not envy the trapped Russian advisers.

At about 0900 hours, it was plinking time. A bunch of Afghan "good old country boys" showed off their marksmanship skills.

A meeting followed, which in turn was closed by the inevitable prayer, and then we traversed the "square billiard balls" again to return to the mujahideen FOB.

However, the return trip was not adventureless. We had to cover approximately 30 klicks and the return trip led through a mine field. An Mi-24 had sown PFM-1 anti-personnel mines along the border — a few-hundred-meters deep — intersecting the trail. It wasn't difficult to spot

RIGHT: Brown tries out DShK — nicknamed "Dashika" by guerrillas. Gun fired tracer incendiary rounds manufactured in communist China. Photo: Jim Coyne

the little brown foot poppers . . . the mujahideen got a big kick out of pointing them out and picking them up to be photographed. I got a big kick out of following *carefully* the tracks of the mujahideen — and even then keeping my eyes peeled.

Then it happened. We heard an explosion in the vicinity of the point — about 40 meters ahead and around the bend.

We moved up quickly and found one mujahid with a hole in his right thigh.

Yes, you can explode a PFM-1 by throwing a rock at it. You can also explode it by stamping on it, hitting it with a hammer or butting it with your head.

The mujahideen like to blow them in place by throwing rocks at them. In this case, the rock was blown back into the "pitcher's" right thigh. The injured mujahid was kidded by his compatriots, patched up and packed out on a horse.



We trekked back to the FOB and returned the next day to Peshawar. We found the hotel's cuisine considerably more appealing now than when we had left.

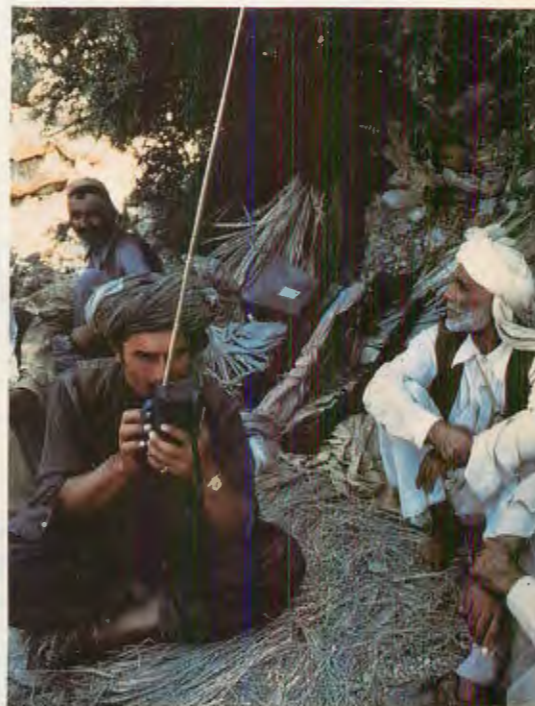
We decided that it wasn't a bad week's work. We had illegally crossed into Afghanistan; travelled over 60 klicks; observed two attacks on a Russian fort; survived a few rounds of incoming from Russian 12.7mm

heavy machine guns, AK-47s and a 82mm mortar; successfully negotiated a Russian mine field; and cemented a close relationship with some of the toughest fighting men in the world. We had whetted our appetites for adventure and support for the Freedom Fighters' cause. They deserve our support, your support and the support of free men everywhere.

As we left, we promised, "We shall return, Ivan." ٭



Hashmat explains upcoming op to SOF at freedom fighters' FOB somewhere in Afghanistan. Photo: Jim Coyne



Mujahideen communication is limited to one pair of commercial walky-talkies — range about three klicks. They do not have expertise to repair or utilize captured Russian radios. Photo: Jim Coyne



Scoping out Russian position before attack. Standoff attacks on this particular fort mounted just before dusk to reduce likelihood of Mi-24 attacks. Russians seldom fly at night. Photo: Jim Coyne

BALLOTS NOT BULLETS AGAINST CALIFORNIA GUN INITIATIVE

GET OUT THE VOTE!

by Bill Guthrie

THE California Gun Initiative is a proposal to limit the numbers, accessibility and possession of concealable firearms. This proposal to freeze the number of handguns and require stringent and restrictive licensing for existing pistols springs from the most commendable humane ambition to make life more secure and certain. There's only one problem: It won't work.

California has millions of handguns within its borders already. For the most part they are guns purchased over dealers' counters with the appropriate paperwork completed, but many were purchased before the federal government required licensing. Many others are purchased in the many states that allow private citizens to buy and sell privately owned handguns without restriction. War trophies make a large contribution to the number of guns that don't exist on paper for either the California state government or the federal government. Californian authorities have no means of counting the number of guns that are already inside the state.

Even if the state could get an accurate list and accounting of its pistols, California shares about 1,200 miles of border with states with less stringent handgun laws. California does a good job of keeping infected fruit out by a system of checkpoints at the border crossings, but if anybody actually

wanted to bring in a medfly or a mortar, he only has to walk a few miles. Considering how easy it is to buy handguns in most western states, trying to control them in one state is idealistic, but perfectly impossible.

The California Gun Initiative is not only unenforceable, it would not provide the protection it promises. The proponents of this initiative proclaim their belief in a direct relationship between the availability of concealable weapons and increasing crime. Limitation of this particular instrument of violence will, in their view, stop violence. If this were an accurate assessment, we would support the initiative.

Unfortunately for humanity, from Cain and Abel through the Lateran Council's 1139 ban on the crossbow to the Versailles Treaty's limitation of the German military to American defoliation of jungles hiding Vietnamese supply routes, arms control has never worked. Do the Sullivan Laws seem to have cut crime in New York City? Does the IRA suffer any lack of pistols, explosives or RPGs? When a man or men want arms, arms will be found. Anything can be dangerous. London managed a very healthy murder rate in the 17th and 18th centuries (witness *The Newgate Chronicles*) with practically no firearms.

The availability of arms cannot control violence,



because weapons can be fashioned from nearly anything. If there is a need for violence in the mind or heart of someone philosophically or emotionally capable of violence, the means will be found. The commonness of a particular kind of weapon defines the method, not the act.

Another very common error embodied in the initiative is the idea that limiting cheap handguns will stop violent crime because the poor will not be able to afford handguns. This solution to lower-class violence is based on the snobbish and unjustified assumption that mayhem among the poor is a product of the unlucky combination of handguns and lots of free time among the unemployed. The poor commit more violent crimes for two reasons: There are more of them and they are unhappier than the rich. When the poor are less pressed economically, socially and emotionally and are allowed sufficient opportunities to improve their lot they will probably neither rob as many convenience stores, nor lay in wait for little old ladies with Social Security checks, nor kill their spouses and children in arguments over money. (The editorial staff of *Soldier of Fortune Magazine* is not nearly unrealistic enough to believe improved living conditions will stop violent crime among the poor. Crime frequency is obviously connected to social stress, but there are honest-to-god criminals out there, too.)

The California Gun Initiative will not stop violent crime and it will hamper the individual citizen's capacity to defend himself and his family. The police and the government cannot be everywhere at once. Without the private citizen being able to defend himself, violent crime cannot be prevented tactically, and the burden on law enforcement authorities is increased.

Even the most rabid conservative will admit that the protection of citizens is perhaps the only really necessary function performed by government, but

the California Gun Initiative exposes what is perhaps the most fundamental difference between liberals and conservatives. American conservatives recognize that the central organizational principle of democracy is participation. A citizen of democracy has to help his neighbors do their dirty work. Paying a palace guard military or police force recruited from the lower classes to do it for you without the middle and upper classes getting their hands dirty won't work. The different results of WWII and the Vietnam War ought to show that. The government will protect us, but only if we are the government.

Arguments of effectuality of such a law would be more relevant in many other countries than they are in the United States of America. Most of Europe is governed by bodies and laws dedicated to the preservation of security and property. Rights of a citizen to his property are preserved in American law, but the right of possession is a subset of his right to personal freedom: The idea of founding an egalitarian democracy in the New World was to create a state dedicated to the citizens' freedom.

The founders of the American state learned from experience that despots do not give people freedom: Freedom must be taken. That was the lesson of the American Revolution and it has been the lesson of every war against coercive governments of both the right and the left. Government — even our government — must be balanced by a constituency that is armed to resist oppression. The right to bear arms in a democracy is not connected with the right to hunt, or even, necessarily, with the right to self-protection. An armed population is its own guarantee of freedom and security.

Arms in the hands of private citizens is the visible expression and symbol of the people's participation in their own government and their own security and of the citizen's concrete guarantee of his own freedom. The California Gun Initiative cannot provide that.

Guns are one symbol of self-determination, but the cast ballot is a symbol and weapon of equal importance. Certainly, the California election will be decided like nearly every other election in the recent history of the United States. The relatively more motivated sector of the electorate will drag the rest along with them. Unfortunately, one of the rights of the people in a democratic government is the right to give their rights and freedom away. All it takes is an election.

VOTERS on both sides must take this crucial opportunity to express their collective will. Since this is an off-year election there will likely be fewer voters than in a presidential electoral year. It may well be that the anti-gun lobby and electorate are using the probability of low voter participation to prepare for a victory by a well-organized minority. If you live in California and want your gun — use your ballot. ☒

SECOND CHANCE COMBAT SHOOT

Bill Wilson

Bowls 'Em Over Again

Text & Photos by Evan Marshall



ABOVE: Jim Higginbotham attacks pins with scoped Remington 1100 with extended magazine in ill-fated attempt at Banzai Charge Bang and Clang.

RIGHT: Top overall and best in this event, Bill Wilson repeated his 1979 win at Second Chance.



ONCE a year Richard Davis disturbs the peace of Central Lake, Mich. But since Davis is the prime mover behind the thriving Second Chance company, he does it up brown. He invites a bunch of his rowdy friends and they proceed to shoot the place up. Since it is Michigan, his neighbors love it. And, of course, the cops come.

A few years ago Richard Davis, the manufacturer of some of America's finest projectile-resistant garments, wanted to thank his friends and customers — American policemen — and so he started a special shooting match for them, the Second Chance Match. A really unusual competition, the Second Chance features events that show off shooting skills and are *fun* without any undue bloodthirstiness.

The Five Pin contest is a fine example of that. Five bowling pins are set on a bench at a decent combat distance, and the shooter bowls 'em over as fast as he can. Sounds easy? Try it. The winner of that event, Bill Wilson, did five runs of five pins apiece at an average speed of less than 4.1 seconds per run. That's almost scary. I also don't need to explain the combat application of this event, at least not to this audience. Wilson won Second Chance overall trophy, the first repeat winner in the history of the contest.

The Eight-Pin, Four-Inch Revolver match was tricky. HKS Speedloaders wanted everybody, even the big-magazine shoot-'em-up boys, to compete in a speed event that required the reloading of a revolver. With six holes in a

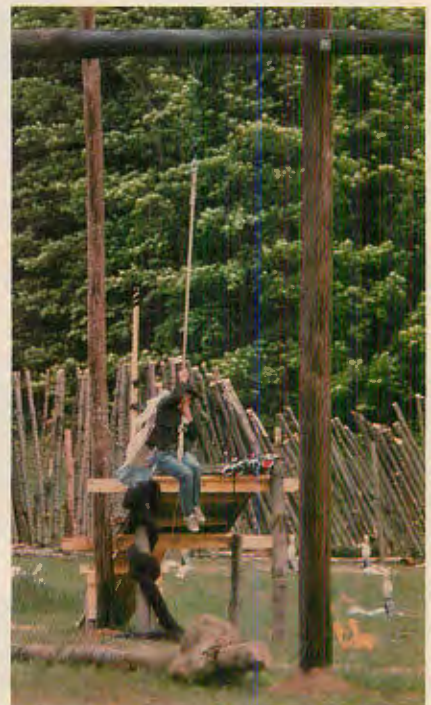
cylinder, all you have to do is have more than six pins and you get to see who's been putting in enough hours on his wheelgun. It was almost boring, since it was hard to be surprised when pistol magician and Bianchi Cup second-place winner Brian Enos cleaned the pins off the table in an almost supernatural 8.6 seconds. It could have been dull watching Enos stomp everybody — but the first six places were only separated by one flat second.

Bobby Reed of the Mississippi Highway Patrol was big man in the Banzai Charge Bang and Clang. Shooters had to run the length of the course to set their targets, an assortment of metallic targets and bowling pins, and then they had to blow them down from a pretty good range, using a shoulder weapon to



ABOVE: Aligned sights and groups that are tight, that's what South African girls are made of: Walli Louw was Top Woman.

BELOW: Speed, endurance and some gymnastics needed to win Long Range Pop and Flop.



blast the metal targets and a handgun for the pins.

No cartridge bigot, Davis had events for everybody. The big-magazine autos had their own arena in the 9mm shoot-off. Nine bowling pins had to be knocked off for time, and pistolsmith Michael Plaxco was the fastest gun. The pins fell in a hail of jacketed lead in a dizzying 4.3 seconds, with only 2/10ths second separating him from runner-up Dave Wheeler.

The Eight-Pin Unlimited tourney allowed pistoleros their choice of revolvers in anything over a four-inch barrel. In spite of the required reload, Elliot Aysen used what must have been a telekinetic edge to clear the table in 7.6 seconds. This competition was as hot as the rest with the spread of the top 10 places a

2.3 seconds.

The Light Rifle Pop and Flop was pure recreation, allowing the high-speed plinker to knock down bowling pins at varying distances for speed with any rifle in any cartridge .233 or less. An Illinois attorney named Jeff Chudwin showed that the law's long arm doesn't necessarily come with flat feet by winning the race in 50.53 seconds with a scoped AR-15.

Women got into the act and the money. They shot in both individual and team events with special prizes of money and diamonds for the deadliest ladies. South African Walli Louw was Top Woman Shooter.

Multiple shooter events drew audiences and impressive performances. Teams assaulted groups of bowling pins

as the courses thundered. Each man had his own 10 pins to shoot before he could help his teammates. John Shaw, Bobby Reed and Brian Enos pulverized 30 pins in 6.1 seconds to take the Three Man contest while Two Man top money went to Roger Burgess and Lloyd Harper for blitzing their total of 10 pins in 3.5 seconds. The three-man team event provided the greatest carnage and the most pleased crowd. Here shootists were allowed their choices of handgun, shotgun or submachine gun. Deafening.

Davis puts this show on every year to thank the policemen who buy his soft, concealable, projectile-resistant vests. It is almost too much that a man who helps save the lives of so many duty cops should give them this good a time on top of it all. ☒

BIG MAGIC

Text & Photos by Kenneth J. Gaudet



AKM bayonet attached to scabbard, ready to be used as wire-cutting tool.



AKM (Russian type) bayonet in scabbard. Note background of Rhodesian camouflage.



Close-up of AKM bayonet showing Russian markings.

AKM Bayonet: Prize Trophy

WHEN I was in Africa, I served with the Rhodesian army's Security Forces. My unit: Support Commando, Recce Troop, Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI). We conducted military operations against ZANLA (Zimbabwe African National People's Army) and ZIPRA (Zimbabwe's People's Revolutionary Army) terrorists. Often after a fire-force contact (or as we called it, a "scene"), a debriefing took place. Then the guys usually brought out their war booty, usually a collection of Chinese oil bottles, canteens, Russian and Chinese stick grenades, AK ammunition pouches or magazines, AK pig-sticker bayonets and AK blade bayonets. But every once in a while somebody got lucky enough to get an AKM bayonet.

Our intelligence people told us the AKM bayonet wasn't general-issue along with the weapons to the terrorists. Only higher-echelon terrorist commanders, political commissars or detachment commanders received them. These were leaders trained in Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique — even Red China or the Soviet Union.

When encountering a terr who carried an AKM bayonet, it was obvious he was neither a *majuiba* (runner or sympathizer) nor a local whose short training included firing six to 10 rounds of ammunition, a mine-laying quickie class, and a return to Rhodesia to raise hell.

I also had the opportunity to work with the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (MNR) and its higher echelon — the officers, NCOs and political and detachment commanders. These personnel always carried the AKM bayonet, which gives the native African a psychological hold over his subordinates. This edge holds true for UNITA forces in Angola as well.

While working with the 32nd Battalion of the South African Army, I learned if a soldier killed a terr, he kept the bayonet to impress others with his skill and bravery. It proved he was *somebody*, possessing magic, or simply a real bad dude.

There are two kinds of AKM wire-cutting bayonets: East German and Russian.

AMERICAN IN AFRICA

Kenneth J. Gaudet served with honor and distinction in Vietnam with 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate) in 1970 and 1971, winning two Bronze Stars, an Air Medal, Purple Heart and Combat Infantryman's Badge. Since then he has also served with the Rhodesian Light Infantry and the South African Parachute Brigade, and fought with them in Mozambique, Zambia, South West Africa and Angola.

Gaudet now works in ship building in California. — Bob Poos

The Russian has a tan or reddish-orange Bakelite handle and fully covered Bakelite scabbard. When inserted onto the scabbard stud, the blade's sharp edge is upward.

The East German model has a black Bakelite handle and the scabbard is steel, covered with a rubber guard to prevent shock while cutting electric wires. In both models, a notch in the blade is inserted onto the scabbard stud in order to cut wires,

AKM bayonet and scabbard. Stud on scabbard is inserted in hole in blade to form wire-cutting tool. This is Soviet version.

and it works very well, cutting through cyclone fences, game fences and light cables.

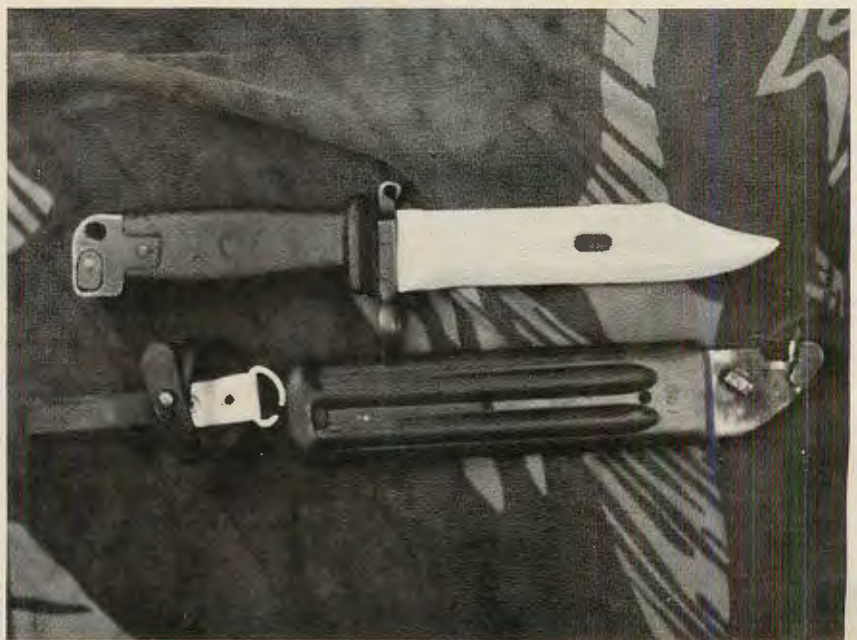
As for the blade itself, it's difficult to sharpen, and can only be edged with a file, because it is made of stainless steel.

The bayonet makes an adequate bush knife, and can be used to dig holes, bury garbage and slice through bags of mealie (corn), as well as cut wire. It has an overall length with scabbard of 12¾ inches. The bayonet itself is 10½ inches long, with a blade length of 5½ inches and width of 1-1/8 inch. The top of the blade is serrated for cutting or sawing.

Standard markings on the Russian model are small triangles with an arrow inside the blade handle and a star on the scabbard. The East German style is usually not marked, but has a rubber-insulated scabbard.

I once tried to buy an AKM bayonet for 100 rand (about \$125 U.S.) from a soldier in the 32nd Battalion of the South African Army. He turned me down: "No! This shows everybody that I have killed a terrorist; that's why I cannot sell it. It has big magic for me."

Whether magic or souvenir, the AKM bayonet is a prized trophy in southern Africa. ☒



MARKETEERING

Continued from page 21

Arctic and the Sahara and perform just as well in each place, it was not fit for Army duty. These emphases had little to do with the experience of modern combat, in which most fire fights took place at a range of thirty to fifty yards or less, and in which speed and surprise were so important that it might often cost a soldier his life to take the time to aim his rifle, as opposed to simply pointing it in the right direction and opening up on automatic.

In its sociology, the ordnance corps was small-time, insular, old-fashioned. Its first instinct, when presented with a new technical possibility, was to reject it and stick to its own, traditional solutions. Twice since the Civil War, American presidents have had to force the ordnance corps to adopt new rifles that had come from outside its own shop.

(When the Civil War began, Union troops were equipped with a cumbersome muzzle-loading rifle. In 1860 a young inventor from outside the ordnance system named Spencer had come up with the first reliable repeating rifle for military use, a lever-action model similar to the Winchester 73, which later became famous in the Old West. Spencer could not get the Army to pay attention to his rifle, but he eventually wangled an appointment with President Lincoln. Spencer and the president went out behind the White House, where a target had been set up. Lincoln, who was a good shot, fired a few rounds from Spencer's rifle and saw its merits. He sent a

note to the Secretary of War — who had been invited to the demonstration but had declined — ordering him to buy the rifle for the Union Army.

The Army bought the minimum amount, 60,000 rifles, and assigned them mostly to the cavalry, saying that they were not suitable for infantry use. Nonetheless, several Union regiments bought Spencer rifles out of their own pockets, rather than use the government issue muzzle-loaders. When the war was over and the president was dead, Col. Ripley, the long-time head of the ordnance corps, quickly declared the Spencer repeating rifle obsolete and ordered it sold. Many of the purchasers were Indians, who used it in their marauding raids — including their attack on George A. Custer at Little Bighorn. Near the bodies of Custer's men were found their standard-issue Army rifles, the single-shot Trap-Door Springfields, which the ordnance corps had developed and which the Indians had not deigned to take.

By the time of the Spanish-American War, the Army had selected and issued to American soldiers a hard-to-load rifle known as the Krag-Jorgensen. When Theodore Roosevelt led his Rough Riders up San Juan Hill, they faced troops equipped with the finest rifle of the time, the Mauser. Three years later, Roosevelt was president, and he ordered the War Department to buy Mausers for American troops. There was little enthusiasm in the Army for a rifle that came not only from outside its own system but also from outside the country. The ordnance corps made some minor modifications on the Mauser design, named it the Springfield '03, and adopted it as the Army standard. This turned out to be so gross an infringement on


the Mauser patent that the Army was forced to pay royalties to the Mauser company."

The M16 story was similar in its general dimension to these two previous episodes, and it also involved a president's intervention. The decision to equip the Special Forces with the original version of the M16, described later in this chapter, was largely engineered by President Kennedy and Secretary McNamara.)

There was also an air of coziness in relations between the ordnance corps and the rifle and ammunition makers who supplied it. "Sole source" contracts, which gave one company a monopoly on the Army's business, were not unusual. One of the most important of these, which would prove to have an especially crucial effect on the development of the M16, was with the Olin-Mathieson Corporation, which since the end of World War II had been the Army's supplier of a kind of gunpowder known as "ball powder."

The ordnance corps had every reason to dislike the AR-15. It came from an outside inventor and threatened to replace a product of their own arsenal system, the M14. It was not a gravel-belly's or a technician's rifle. And it proposed using what was, by the standards of the corps, a laughably small round — a .22-caliber bullet, the size kids used to shoot at squirrels. A popgun was all it was. In the early fifties the U.S. ordnance corps had fought a grueling battle against European governments in NATO, who wanted to have a small bullet adopted as the NATO standard. The ordnance corps' struggle to impose the .30-caliber bullet as NATO standard had been successful, but it had left much ill will in its wake. Having won that bitter struggle, the

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Army was not likely to surrender meekly on the same point in its own home territory.⁸

The M14 was adopted as the Army's standard in 1957. At the same time, Eugene Stoner was completing the design of the rifle then known as the AR-15. By that time Stoner was known as one of the great figures in this special calling. Like some of the other outstanding American rifle designers — including John Browning, inventor of the Browning Automatic Rifle, who had to sell his weapon to foreign governments after rejection by the American ordnance corps — Stoner had never seen his models win easy acceptance from the Army. Stoner was working for the Armalite Corporation when he finished developing the AR-15.

The rifle combined several advantages. One was the lethal "payoff" that came with its .22-caliber bullets. The smaller, lighter ammunition meant that the rifle could be controlled on automatic fire by the average soldier because its kick was so much less than the M14's. The rifle itself was also lighter than the M14. Together, these savings in weight meant that a soldier using the AR-15 could carry almost three times as many rounds as a man with the M14. This promised to eliminate one of the soldier's fundamental problems in combat: running out of ammunition during a fire fight. The rifle had two other technical advantages. One was the marvelous reliability of its moving parts, which could feed, fire, extract, and eject 600 or 700 cartridges a minute and practically never jam. The other was a manufacturing innovation that drastically cut the cost of the weapon. The parts were stamped out, not hand-machined as in previous rifles, and they could be truly mass-produced. The stock was

made of plastic, which further cut the cost. To traditionalists, this was one more indication that the AR-15 was not a real weapon. They said that you couldn't use a plastic rifle as a club. Stoner's reply, in effect, was that with the AR-15's reliability and its destructive power, you wouldn't need to.

The AR-15 was tested in 1958 at three military bases. The reports were favorable, but there were reservations from the ordnance establishment about the propriety of using such small-caliber ammunition. To reconcile the differences in opinion, the Army commissioned an extensive series of tests at the Army Combat Development Experiment Center, known as CEDEC, at Fort Ord, California. These tests ran from the fall of 1958 until the spring of 1959, and were designed not to follow the usual marksman's pattern, but to simulate the conditions of small squads in combat. In the tests, the AR-15 was matched against the M14 and another lightweight rifle made by Winchester. The results, released in May 1959, included these findings:

a. With a total weight per man equivalent to that planned for a rifleman armed with the M14, a squad of 5-7 men armed with the [AR-15] would have better hit distribution and better hit capability than the present eleven-man M14 squad.

b. By opinion poll, the experimentation troops preferred the [AR-15] because of its demonstrated characteristics of lightness in weight, reliability, balance and grip, and freedom from recoil and climb on full automatic (ease of firing)....

h. The attributes demonstrated by the prototype weapons of the lightweight high-velocity category indicate an overall combat potential superior to that of the M14. Such ad-

vantages include: lightness in weight of arms and ammunition, ease of handling, superior full automatic firing capability, accuracy of the Winchester, and functional reliability of the Armalite [AR-15].⁹

The report's conclusion was that the Army should develop a lightweight rifle "with the reliability characteristics of the Armalite" to replace the M14. "Concurrent with the adopting of a lightweight high-velocity rifle," the report said, "serious consideration should be given to reduction in the size of the present squad," because of the increased fire power of the new weapons.¹⁰

The repeated references to the "reliability" of the AR-15 bear emphasizing, in view of the weapon's unreliability after it had been transformed into the M16 and sent to war.

After the CEDEC tests, the Army admitted the theoretical "promise" of the lightweight system but rejected it as a practical proposition. It is important to remember that the ordnance corps had fought this battle before. In 1928 the special Caliber Board had conducted extraordinarily demanding and realistic tests, and ended up recommending that the Army move to a smaller, .276-caliber bullet. In 1932 Douglas MacArthur, then the Chief of Staff, turned down the recommendation, accepting the advice of the chief of ordnance that it would be too confusing to introduce a new bullet to the Army's supplies. Thirty years later, in the arguments over the M16, that was still the ordnance corps' line. Emphasizing the importance of having all rifles and machine guns use the same ammunition, the Army ordered full scheduled production of the M14 and its .30-caliber round.

However, advocates of the AR-15 enlisted the support of a redoubtable gun enthusiast,



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Gen. Curtis LeMay, then the Air Force's Chief of Staff. Based on his interest, the Air Force conducted further tests and inspections and declared the AR-15 its "standard" model in January 1962. The Air Force then took a step whose later significance would be enormous. On the advice of the Armalite Corporation, which owned the design for the rifle, and of Colt, which had the contract to manufacture it, the Air Force tested a sample of the ammunition that the Remington Arms Company had developed for the AR-15. After the tests, the Air Force declared the ammunition suitable for its purposes. In May 1962 it ordered 8,500 rifles from Colt and 8.5 million rounds of ammunition from Remington.

At this point, decisions about the rifle moved from the world of tests and paper specifications to that of actual combat. In 1962 the Defense Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency, prompted by staff members who were advocates of the AR-15, managed to get 1,000 AR-15s shipped to Vietnam for tests by ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) soldiers. The rationale was that Vietnamese soldiers were too short and slight to handle rifles with full-sized ammunition. The reports were glowing, especially about the phenomenal reliability of the weapon. There were no broken parts reported in the firing of 80,000 rounds during one stage of the tests. In the whole period, only two replacement parts were issued for all 1,000 rifles. The report recommended that the AR-15 be shipped in bulk to South Vietnam as standard equipment for the ARVN

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soldier. But Admiral Harry Felt, then the Commander in Chief, Pacific Forces, rejected the recommendation, based on Army advice saying that it would create a complicated logistics problem to have different rifles using different rounds in the war zone. The Joint Chiefs of Staff supported his decision.

Through 1962 and 1963, there followed a series of tests, evaluations and counterevaluations by the American military, the repeated theme of which was the lightness, "lethality" and reliability of the AR-15. The results of one test, conducted by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, were summed up in September 1962 by the Comptroller of the Defense Department:

"Taking into account the greater lethality of the AR-15 rifle and improvements in accuracy and rate of fire in this weapon since 1959, in overall squad kill potential the AR-15 is up to five times as effective as the M14 rifle...."

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Meanwhile the Army Materiel Command, home of the ordnance corps, was conducting its own evaluations of the AR-15. In these, too, there was consistency. The corps found little to admire in the AR-15, and many technical objections to it. It had poor “pointing and night firing characteristics”; its penetration at long distance was also poor. The ordnance corps’ recommendation was to stick with the M14 until a “radically” better model, based on advanced technology, emerged from research programs the ordnance labs had recently begun.

Early in 1963, with strong support from President Kennedy and Secretary of Defense McNamara, the Special Forces (Green Berets) asked for and got approval to use the AR-15 as their standard issue because they needed lightweight gear for mobility and stealth. The Army’s Airborne units in Vietnam also got it, as did some operatives from the CIA. As the AR-15 attracted a greater and greater following among units actually operating in Vietnam, Secretary of the Army Cyrus Vance asked the Army’s Inspector General to look again at the reasoning and evidence that had led the Army Materiel Command to reject the AR-15. His investigation found that the tests had been blatantly rigged. The M14s used in the tests were all hand-picked, hand-made, “matchgrade” weapons (suitable for marksmen’s competitions), while the AR-15s were taken straight from the box. The ammunition for the M14 had also come from a special, coddled lot.

The inspector found that various organizations of the ordnance corps had met beforehand to discuss how to fix the tests. They agreed to take a dry run through the tests,

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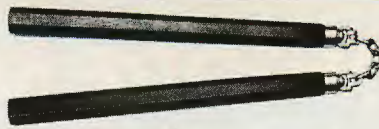
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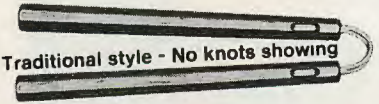


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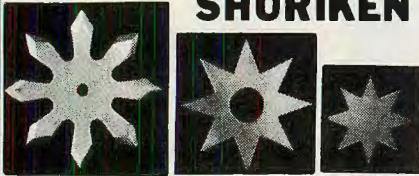
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and then (according to the printed minutes of their meeting) include in the final tests "only those tests that will reflect adversely on the AR-15 rifle..."¹² The lines became more clearly drawn within the Pentagon, with the Air Force and the civilian leadership of the Defense Department (especially McNamara and his Secretary of the Army, Cyrus Vance) in favor of the AR-15 and the Army ordnance establishment opposed.

As the fighting in Vietnam grew more intense, procurement of the rifle began in late 1963, with 19,000 rifles for the Air Force and another 85,000 for the special Army units. Robert McNamara, in the interests of efficiency, designated the Army as the central procurement agency for all the services. It was at this point that the Army ordnance corps got hold of Eugene Stoner's AR-15, declared it to be inadequately "developed," and "militarized" it into the M16.

The first of several modifications was the addition of a "manual bolt closure," a handle that would permit the soldier to ram a cartridge in manually after it had refused to seat properly by itself. The Air Force, which was to buy the rifle, and the Marine Corps, which had tested it, objected vehemently to this change. An Air Force document said, "During three years of testing and operation of the AR-15 rifle under all types of conditions the Air Force has no record of malfunctions that could have been corrected by a manual bolt closing device."¹³ Worse, they said, the device would add cost, weight, and complexity to the weapon, thereby reducing the reliability that had been its greatest asset.

Years later, during the congressional testimony, Col. Harold Yount, who had been a



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project manager at the Rock Island arsenal in 1963, was asked how this change could have been justified. Not on the basis of complaints, or of prior tests, Col. Yount said. It was justified "on the basis of direction."¹⁴ Direction from where? a congressman asked. Direction from his superiors on the Army staff, was all he would say. The fact was that Gen. Earle Wheeler, the Army's Chief of Staff, had personally ordered the useless handle.

The next modification was to increase the "twist" of the rifle's barrel, from a one-in-14-inches twist rate to one-in-12. More twist made the bullet spin faster as it flew, and therefore made it hold a more stable path; but by exactly the same process, it made the bullet more stable as it entered flesh, and thereby greatly reduced the shocking "lethality" that had so distinguished the AR-15.

In the face of the logic that led the Army to this decision, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that reducing the M16's "lethality," along with its other advantages over the beloved M14, was precisely the intention of the change. The Army's explanation for the increased "twist" of the barrel was that otherwise the rifle could not meet its all-environments test. To qualify as "Army standard," a rifle and its ammunition had to show that they would perform equally well at 65 degrees below zero and 125 above. On the basis of skimpy test evidence, an Arctic testing team concluded that the AR-15 did not do so well on the cold-weather portions of its test. Supposedly, the rounds wobbled in flight at 65 below. The Army's reaction was to increase the "twist" and thereby decrease the "lethality," even though the rifle was due for shipment to the steaming jungles along the Mekong.

The final change was the most important. Like the others, it was publicly justified by a letter-of-the-law application of technical specification, but it seems to have been motivated by a desire to discredit the AR-15 as a competitor to the Army's own M14.

Weapons designers speak of automatic rifles as "resonant mechanisms," in which several different cycles must all work in harmony. One of the determining factors for synchronizing these cycles is the explosive characteristic of the ammunition. Some powders explode very quickly, others build up pressure more slowly. Depending on that pattern, certain other decisions follow — for example, the location of the "gas port," or the proper cycling rate for inserting and extracting the bullets. Eugene Stoner had designed his AR-15 around a powder known as IMR (for "improved military rifle"). It was pro-

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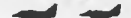
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duced by Du Pont, which sold it to Remington to fill the cartridges. It is made of nitrocellulose, sometimes known as guncotton, which is extruded like toothpaste and cut into little granules. All of the early tests of the AR-15 had involved IMR ammunition; it was the ammunition that the Air Force had accepted and that had proven so reliable in all field trials.

In June 1963 the Army Materiel Command conducted tests at Frankford Arsenal which showed that IMR powder would not do. Once again, it seems obvious that the test was designed to produce exactly this result. The problem, as with the barrel twist, was failure to meet a technical specification. For reasons that no members of the ordnance corps could ever satisfactorily explain to congressional investigators, the Army specified that the muzzle velocity for the rifle must average 3,250 feet per second, plus or minus 40. In all its previous tests, and in its successful performance in combat in Vietnam, the AR-15 had never attained that velocity. The Army had tested the weapon thoroughly enough to know that when it was fired with the gunpowder it had originally been designed to use, its velocity averaged about 100 feet per second less. No testing panel had complained about the lower velocity. No problems had shown up in combat — quite the contrary. But when the Army's "technical data package" for the M16 was issued in 1963, it required the 3,250 fps muzzle velocity, and also specified that the pressure within the firing chamber could not exceed 52,000 pounds per square inch.

After a good deal of negotiation and haggling that lasted several months, the outcome of the Frankford Arsenal tests was that IMR

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ammunition could not meet the newly devised standards. To get the velocity up to 3,250 fps, it had to bring chamber pressure too close to the limit. In February 1964 the Army sent out a request to the manufacturers to come up with substitute powders. A few months later Du Pont said it would stop producing IMR, and Remington switched to the Army's "sole-source" supplier of "ball powder," Olin-Mathieson. By the end of 1964 Remington was loading only ball powder in its cartridges for the rifle, which by now had been renamed the M16.

Ball powder was first adopted by the Army early in World War II, for use in certain artillery rounds. It differs from being "double-based" (made of nitrocellulose and nitroglycerine) and in certain other ways. Its most important difference is its explosive characteristics, for it burns longer and slower than IMR. Olin-Mathieson has long enjoyed a comfortable relationship with the ordnance corps as the "sole-source" supplier of ball powder for many ammunition jobs.¹³ Olin-Mathieson received contracts for some 89 million cartridges in 1964 alone, and far more as the war went on. More than 90 percent of the cartridges used in Vietnam were loaded with ball powder.

After the Army had made the decision to switch to ball powder, it sent a representative, Frank Vee of the Comptroller's office, to try to get Eugene Stoner to endorse the change. Stoner had not been consulted on any of the modifications to his rifle, not the bolt closure nor the barrel twist nor the ball powder, and he thought that all were bad ideas. He recalled for the congressional committee his meeting with Vee:

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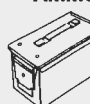


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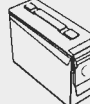
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"He asked me my opinion (about the specs requiring ball powder) after the fact. In other words, this was rather an odd meeting. . . I looked at the technical data package and he said, 'What is your opinion?' I said, 'I would advise against it. . .'"

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"And I said, 'Well, we both now don't feel so good.'"16

The reason for Stoner's concern was that the change of powders destroyed most of the qualities he had built into his rifle. With ball powder, the M16 looked better on the Army's new specification sheets but worse in operation. There were two problems. One was "fouling" — a powder residue on the inside of the gas tube and chamber that eventually made the rifle jam. The AR-15 had been designed so that its gas port stayed closed through the combustion of the powder, but that was for a different powder. The new ball powder was inherently dirtier; in addition, it burned longer, and was still burning when the gas port opened and let it burn into the gas tube.

The other effect of ball powder was to increase the rifle's "cyclic rate." The AR-15, with all its interlocking mechanical cycles, had been designed to fire between 750 and 800 rounds per minute. When cartridges loaded with ball powder were used, the rate went up to 1,000 or more. "When the Army said, 'No, we are going to use our ammunition,' the cyclic rate of the weapons went up at least 200 rounds per minute," Stoner told the congressional committee.17 "That gun would jump from 750 to about 1,000 rounds a minute, with no change other than changing the ammunition."18

The consequences of a higher cyclic rate were immediate and grave. What had been a supremely reliable rifle was now given to chronic breakdowns and jams. In November 1965, engineers from Colt fired a number of rifles, some with the original IMR powder and some with ball. They reported: "For weapons such as those used in this experiment, none are likely to fail with ammunition such as [IMR], whereas half are likely to fail with ammunition such as [ball powder]."19

In December the Frankford Arsenal conducted another test for malfunctions. When M16s were loaded with IMR cartridges, there were 3.2 malfunctions per 1,000 rounds, and .75 stoppages. When the same rifles were fired with ball powder, the failure rates were about six times higher (18.5 and 5.2, respectively). Under the central procurement policy, the Army's decision also forced the Air Force to switch to ball powder. The Air Force protested, pointing out that the rifles had been extremely reliable when loaded with IMR. One Air Force representative described a test in which 27 rifles fired 6,000 rounds apiece. The malfunction rate was one per 3,000 rounds, and the parts replacement rate one per 6,200 rounds. The rifle and its original cartridge worked fine, the Air Force insisted, even though they didn't happen to meet the specifications of 3,250 feet per second from the muzzle.20

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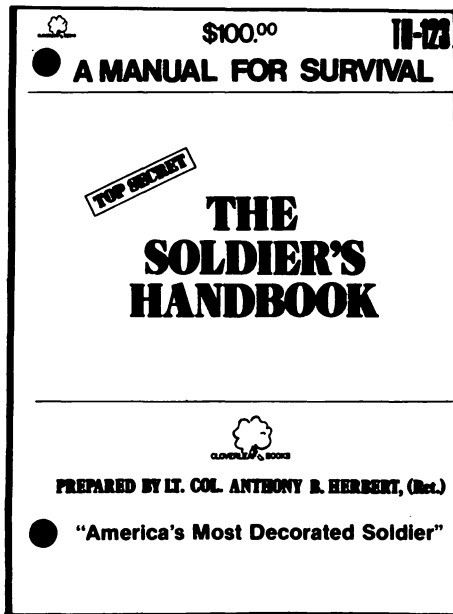
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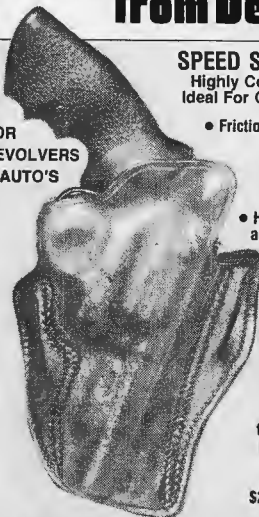
Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Wednesday, Aug. 27

The book's already a big hit among old military hands, narcotics folk, cops, corporations and individuals with more than just a little to protect. And, promises Herbert, the book will be updated periodically. Which might prove necessary. After all, you never know when another Noble Cause may come loping around the next corner. □

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In May 1966 there was one more report, this one the result of an extensive and unusually realistic series of tests held by the Army's CEDEC field test organization at Fort Ord. In these tests, the soldiers fired as squads, not as individuals; the targets resembled real battlefield targets, in that they were hard to see, and obscured by brush and other cover; there was simulated fire from the targets themselves, done in a pattern resembling that of combat; soldiers were run through the course only once, to avoid any familiarity with it.

The conclusion was that the M16 was more effective than the M14 or the Soviet AK-47 (which was also tested), but that it was an unreliable weapon. The reason for the fouling, the jamming, and the breakdowns, the testers said, was the switch to ball powder.²¹ By that time the Army was ordering ball powder in greater quantities than ever and shipping it to Vietnam.

In 1965, after the years of the advisers and the Special Forces, American troops began full-fledged ground combat in Vietnam. The regular Army and Marine units carried the old M14. On arrival, they discovered several things about their weapon. One was that in jungle warfare the inaccurate, uncontrollable M14 was no match for the AK-47, made in the Soviet Union, which their enemies used. Both rifles fired a .30-caliber bullet, but the AK-47's cartridges had a lighter bullet and were packed with less powder, which reduced the recoil to an endurable range. They also saw that the old AR-15s that had been used by the Special Forces had been a big hit in Vietnam. On the black market the weapon was going for \$600 (the original price was around \$100), to soldiers who were willing to sacrifice several months' pay to get hold of one.

One of those who noticed these patterns was William Westmoreland, then the commander of American forces in Vietnam. He saw that his men were doing very badly in the fire fights against the AK-47 and that the casualties were heavy. He also saw how the AR-15 performed, and near the end of December 1965 he sent an urgent, personal request for the M16, immediately, as standard equipment for units in Vietnam.

The ordnance corps met this request with grudging compliance. The rifle would be sent to Vietnam, but only as a special, limited purchase. It would not be issued to American troops in Europe or in the United States, it would not replace the M14 as the Army's standard weapon. Nor would it go to Viet-

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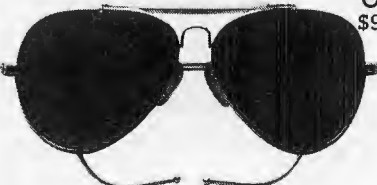


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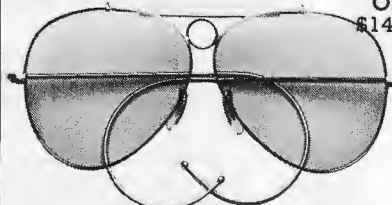


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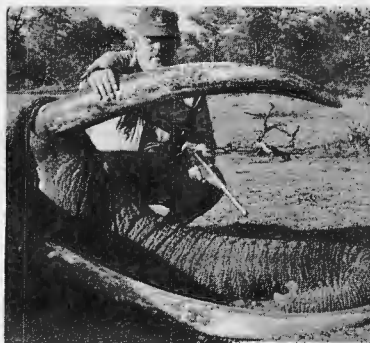
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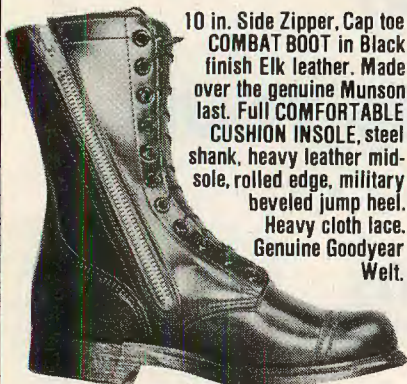
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nam under circumstances likely to show off
its merits, because there was no backing off
the requirement that its cartridges be filled
with ball powder.

The climactic struggle over ball powder
had occurred one year before Westmore-
land's request, in 1964. As test after test
showed that ball powder made the rifle fire
too fast and then jam, the manufacturing
company finally threw up its hands. Colt said
that it could no longer be responsible for the
M16's passing the Army's acceptance test. It
could not guarantee performance with the
ball powder. One of the provisions of test was
that the rifle's cyclic rate not exceed 850
rounds per minute, and six out of ten rifles
were far above that when using ball powder.
Don't worry, the Army said in an official letter;
*you can use whatever ammunition you
want for the tests.* But we'll keep sending our
ball powder to Vietnam.

Beginning in 1964, Colt used IMR powder
so that its rifles would pass the acceptance
tests; the Army promptly equipped those rifles
with ball-powder cartridges and sent them to
soldiers who needed them to stay alive. The
Army's official reasoning on the matter was
that since it did not recognize the theories
that ball powder was the cause of the problems,
why should it care which powder Colt used?
Colt delivered at least 330,000 rifles under
this agreement. After uncovering the arrangement,
the Ichord committee concluded in its report:

"Undoubtedly, many thousands of these
were shipped or carried to Vietnam, with the
Army on notice that the rifles failed to meet
design and performance specifications and
might experience excessive malfunctions
when firing ammunition loaded with ball propellant
[emphasis in original]. . . . The rifle project
manager, the administrative contracting officer,
the members of the Technical Coordinating
Committee, and others as high in authority as
the Assistant Secretary of Defense for
Installations and Logistics knowingly accepted
M16 rifles that would not pass the approved
acceptance test. . . . Colt was allowed to test
using only IMR propellant at a time when the
vast majority of ammunition in the field,
including Vietnam, was loaded with ball
propellant. The failure on the part of officials
with authority in the Army to cause action to
be taken to correct the deficiencies of the
5.56mm ammunition borders on criminal
negligence."²²

The denouncement was predictable and
tragic. In the field, the rifle fouled and
jammed. More American soldiers survived in
combat than would have with the M14, but
the M16's failures were spectacular and
entirely unnecessary. When they heard the
complaints, ordnance officials said it only
proved what they'd said all along, that it was
a lousy rifle, anyway. The official Army
hierarchy took the view that it was a question
of improper maintenance. Officials from the
Pentagon would go on inspection tours to
Vietnam and scold the soldiers for not
keeping the rifles clean enough, but there
never seemed to be enough cleaning supplies
for the M16. The instruction leaflets put out
by the Army told them that "This rifle will
fire longer without cleaning or oiling than
any other known rifle," and "an occasional
cleaning will keep the weapon functioning
indefinitely."²³

At last the soldiers began writing letters —
to their parents, to their girl friends, and to
the commercial manufacturer of a rifle
lubricant called Dri-Slide. The Dri-Slide
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Dear Sir:

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Sir, if you will send three hundred and sixty cans along with the bill, I'll "gladly" pay it out of my own pocket. This will be enough for every man in our company to have a can. _____, Spec. Fourth Class

9 March 1967

Dear Sir:

I'm very much interested in your product, Dri-Slide. Being stationed here in Vietnam with the rain seasons coming, myself and other GIs I'm with, need something to keep our weapons from jamming up. The regular type oil that we are using collects too much dust, and the dust here is quite terrible. _____, Spec. Fourth Class²⁴

Parents in Idaho received this letter from their son, a Marine:

"Our M16s aren't worth much. If there's dust in them, they will jam. Half of us don't have cleaning rods to unjam them. Out of 40 rounds I've fired, my rifle jammed about 10 times. I pack as many grenades as I can plus bayonet and K bar (jungle knife) so I'll have something to fight with. If you can, please send me a bore rod and a 1 1/4-inch or so paint brush. I need it for my rifle. These rifles are getting a lot of guys killed because they jam so easy."²⁵

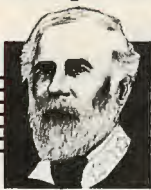
One man wrote to a member of the Armed Services Committee staff, recounting what his brother had told him about his experience in Vietnam:

"He went on to tell me how, in battles there in Vietnam, the only things that were left by the enemy after they had stripped the dead of our side were the rifles, which they considered worthless. That when battles were over the dead would have the rifles beside them, torn down to attempt a repair because of some malfunction when the enemy attacked . . . This man speaking has been shooting since he was 15 . . . He said, "part

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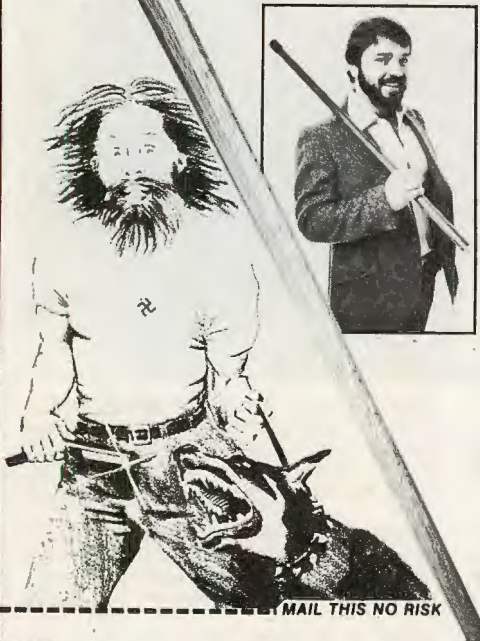
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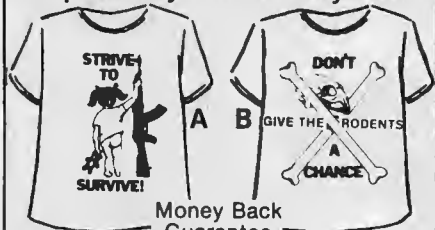
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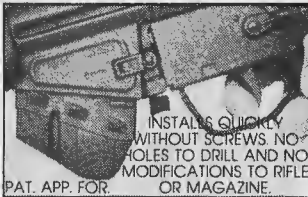
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of me dies when I have to stand by and see people killed, and yet my hands are tied.”²⁶

A letter that ended up in the office of Representative Charles W. Whalen, Jr., of Ohio:

“I was walking point a few weeks back and that piece of you know what jammed three times in a row on me. I’m lucky I wasn’t doing anything but reconning by fire or I wouldn’t be writing this letter now. When I brought the matter up to the Captain, he let me test fire the weapon — well in 50 rounds it double fed and jammed 14 times. I guess I’ll just have to wait till someone gets shot and take his rifle because the Captain couldn’t get me a new one.”²⁷

Another, referred to Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin:

“The weapon has failed us at crucial moments when we needed fire power most. In each case, it left Marines naked against their enemy. Often, and this is no exaggeration, we take counts after each fight, as many as 50 percent of the rifles fail to work. I know of at least two Marines who died within 10 feet of the enemy with jammed rifles. No telling how many have been wounded on that account and it is difficult to count the NVA who should be dead but live because the M16 failed. Of course, the political ramifications of this border on national scandal. I suppose that is why the Commandant and all the big-wigs are anxious to tell all that it is a wonderful weapon.

“My loyalty has to be with these 18-year old Marines. Too many times (yesterday most recently) I’ve been on TF’s awaiting medical evacuation and listened to bandaged and bleeding troops cuss the M16. Yesterday, we got in a big one ... The day found one Marine beating an NVA with his helmet and a hunting knife because his rifle failed — this can’t continue — 32 of about 80 rifles failed yesterday.”²⁸

When investigators from the congressional committee went to Vietnam, they confirmed another report: that one Marine had been killed as he ran up and down the line in his squad, unjamming rifles, because he had the only cleaning rod in the squad.²⁹

The technical data that came out of the congressional inquiry convinced the members of the committee to release an unusually sharp report, charging that the M16 had been sabotaged by the ordnance corps. Yet the most striking aspect of the testimony was its

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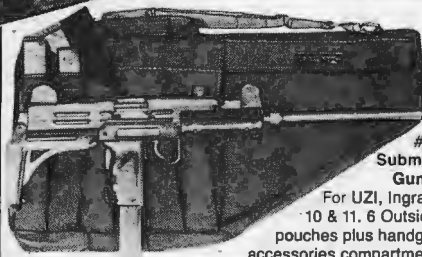
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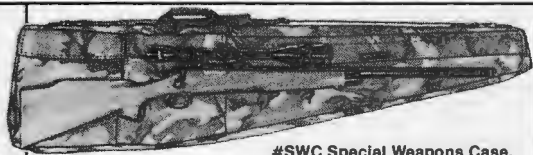
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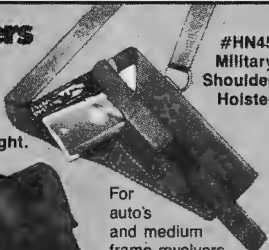
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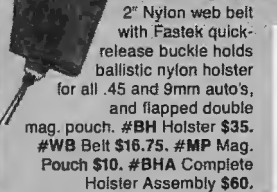


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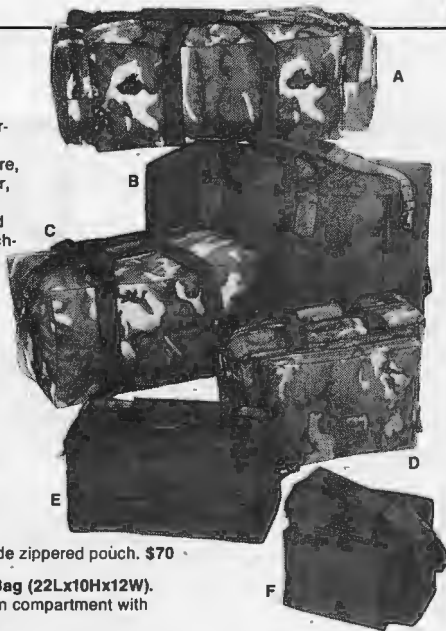


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humdrum, routine tone. When representatives of the ordnance corps were pressed to explain their decisions, they fell back on citations from the rule books, like characters in a parody of the bureaucratic temperament. (This exchange between Representative Ichord and Col. Harold Yount, who was the Army's project manager for the M16, suggests the petty bureaucratic tone of the Army's explorations:

ICHORD: Has anyone in the Army Materiel Command made a study trying to relate malfunctions to cyclic rates using 5.56 millimeter ammunition, Col. Yount?

YOUNT: The test, of course, that we conducted at Frankford Arsenal in December, 1966 was aimed at doing this ... As far as other studies are concerned, are you referring to something like computer studies?

ICHORD: Any type of study, just trying to get a correlation. I believe we have had record statements that you had no way of knowing that increase in the cyclic rate of approximately 100 rounds per minute would increase the malfunctions of the rifle. That is why I asked the question. Has there been any study trying to correlate it?

YOUNT: Oh, yes, since that time we have found that if this weapon is fired above 850 rounds per minute you are going to run into malfunctions due to the higher cyclic rate. Prior to that time we did not have this number isolated.³⁹⁾

They seemed to have a hard time remembering who was responsible for crucial decisions; they tended to explain things by saying, "the feeling was," or "the practice has been ..." They could list with careful bureaucratic logic the reasonableness of each step they had taken: If you didn't have Arctic test requirements, you might not have adaptable rifles. If you didn't change to ball powder,

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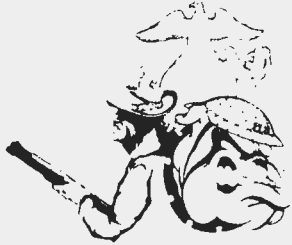
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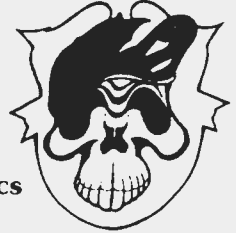
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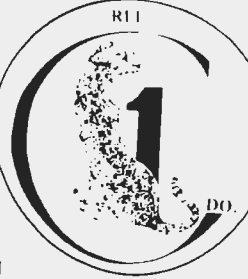
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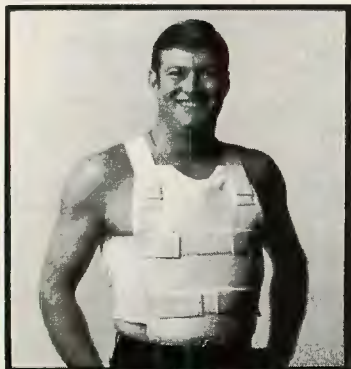
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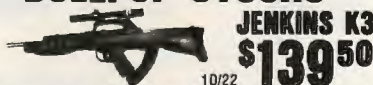
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you would have had chamber pressures over the allowable limit — which might have been dangerous for the troops.

They seemed not to see a connection between these choices and the soldiers who were dying with jammed rifles in their arms. They were certainly aware of the M16's troubles, and bowed to no one in their concern. What it proved, they said, was that the rifle had always been a risky experiment — especially (as they pointed out several times) when it was being used by the kind of soldiers the draft was dredging up these days, who couldn't understand the importance of keeping their weapons clean.

Even the accusations of impropriety were small-time. In its report, the committee criticized one Nelson Lynde, Jr., a general who was in charge of the Army Weapons Command between 1962 and 1964 and approved purchases of the M16 from Colt, and then accepted a job shortly after retirement with the parent company of Colt. The committee reprimanded Gen. Lynde for an apparent conflict of interests — even though, as Lynde pointed out, the Army's counsel had not forbidden him to accept the job. The committee also urged an audit of the profits Colt had made on the rifle and of the "sole-source" relationship with Olin-Mathieson.

In 1980 I asked the committee's investigator, Earl Morgan, whether more blatant corruption — bribes, kickbacks — had been involved. "Oh, I'd be amazed if there wasn't some, knowing how that business is done," he said. "But we never found anything we could prove."

The committee also recommended that the Army immediately conduct a thorough, honest test of the two kinds of ammunition, with the strong suggestion that it should switch back to IMR. That never happened. Instead of going back to the original powder, the ordnance corps modified the ball powder and changed the mechanical "buffer" of the rifle, which slowed down the cyclic rate. That solved part of the jamming problem, but did not restore the rifle's original reliability or "lethality." (Nor was the change in the barrel "twist" ever corrected.) Through every day of combat in Vietnam, American troops fired cartridges filled with the ball powder that was the legacy of the ordnance corps. They still do.

The ordnance corps is still at work. Late in 1980, after Army troops went on exercises in Egypt, unattributed comments started showing up in news reports about the special circumstances of desert war. You could see for miles across the sand, the stories said. What you really needed was a rifle that would be sharpshooter accurate at 600 or 800 yards — not a popgun like the M16. What you really needed was a weapon from the Army's own labs.

END NOTES:

- Hearings, Special Subcommittee on the M16 Rifle Program, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives, 90th Cong., 1st sess. (Referred to as "Hearings.")
- Ibid.*, pp. 4563-64.
- Keegan, *Face of Battle*, p. 229.
- Thomas McNaughton, "Marksmanship, McNamara, and the M16 Rifle: Innovation in Military Organization," *Public Policy* (Winter 1980), pp. 1-37.
- Ibid.*, p. 4.
- Ibid.*, p. 7.
- The rifle stories are told in *Plowshares into Swords: Managing the American Defense Establishment*, by Jacob Stockfish (New York: Mason & Lipscomb, 1973), and *Small Arms of the World*, 10th rev. ed. (Harrisburg: Stackpole, 1973).
- A useful history of the rifle programs is laid out in the "Report of the Special Subcommittee on the M16 Rifle Program," Report Number 26, Committee on

9. Quoted in "Report," p. 5323.
10. *Loc. cit.*
11. *Ibid.*, p. 5327.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 5330.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 5333.
14. "Hearings," p. 4701.
15. See GAO report B-146977, issued 31 March 1965.
16. "Hearings," p. 4559.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 4549.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 4571.
19. "Report," p. 5356.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 5355.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 5357.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 5354 and 5370.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 5363.
24. "Hearings," pp. 4509-10.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 4584.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 4582-83.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 4583.
28. *Loc. cit.*
29. *Ibid.*, p. 4873.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 4994. ☒

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Continued from page 12

might be safe in commercial cases will be dangerously over-pressure in military cases. Most loading manuals are calibrated for commercial cases. If you are using military brass, reduce the listed charge by at least 10 percent.

Reloads in which the powder has inadvertently been left out will rarely cause problems as the primer alone usually is not sufficient to drive the bullet out of the chamber. Thus the bolt will not go into battery without the application of considerable force on the operating handle. Squib loads or partially inert rounds, such as may be encountered with much of the surplus French-manufactured .45 ACP ball ammo still floating around, represents a far more dangerous situation. When firing a blowback-operated submachine gun, if the projectile is forced partially up the barrel by a squib load, the weapon will cycle the next round and a bulged barrel will invariably result. A recoil- or gas-operated auto weapon will usually fail to cycle in the event a projectile lodges part way up the bore, and only its operator can initiate the impending disaster. If a weapon of this type fails to cycle, do not under any circumstances manually charge the operating handle without first clearing the gun and running a cleaning rod down through the bore.

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I WAS THERE

Continued from page 11

with the black rope around his forehead. Everything went into slow motion as he chambered a round into the bolt-action Lee-Enfield rifle he was holding. I took one step back and he levelled the rifle at my chest. We stood looking at each other over his sights as I slowly lowered my camera to my side. I knew there was no place to run and nothing to hide behind. We looked at each other for a long moment. I realized this was it.

I was sure he saw I was unarmed but that didn't make me feel any better. We stood frozen in time until I gave him an exaggerated shrug as if to say "now what do I do?" He pulled his rifle back to port arms and waved at me with one hand as if to say, "Get the hell out of here." I slowly backed around the corner and into the arms of the sergeant who had seen the open door and was out looking for me.

We ran back to the door, and he pulled me inside and slammed the door. "What the hell were you doing out in no-man's land?" he demanded. I told him I got lost turning the stairs. He explained to me that the windows of the apartment building next door were boarded up because over the years Arab snipers had killed people sitting down to dinner or women hanging out laundry. He said I was lucky to be alive.

We went out and had a few beers after that, and I was surprised how good that Israeli Neshar beer was beginning to taste. So Arab Legionnaire, wherever you are, I hope you read this, and thank you. ✕

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FLAK

Continued from page 6

the new NATO SS-109 round, but I'm told this won't prevent the use of the current M-193 5.56 projectiles being sold as surplus. Using M-193 at 100m I'm getting 4-5 inch groups with iron sights.

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 R. Soncini
 Oakland, California

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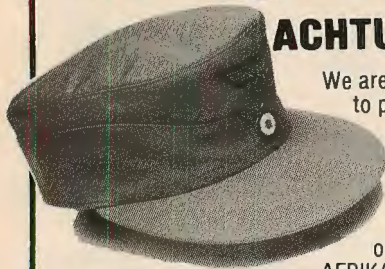
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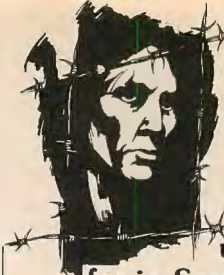
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I am a member of a USMCR staff study unit assigned to MAG 46 MARTD, MCAS, El Toro, California. This information will be of value to the members of our unit when we deploy to the field, particularly to places like Fallon NAS, Nev. or MWTC Bridgeport, Calif. I'm certain the unit can use this info when we get recalled as well.

I enjoy the timely and factual articles your magazine publishes as do many other Marines in our unit. Keep up the good work, thanking you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,
Hubie Much
Col. USMCR

The only vitamin our group has found useful in this regard is vitamin B1 or thiamine.

Dosage: Three (3) 100 mg tablets twice a day (early AM and late afternoon). We use the cheapest brand we can find. We begin taking it the day before going into the field and continue it throughout an operation. This seems to give 24 hour protection, although we still use mosquito netting at night.

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Vitamin B1 gets into sweat. We think it's the taste or smell that deters the insect from biting. They still frequently land on you, they just don't seem to bite.

We have not used this method on large groups. So I would be very interested in your comments after trying this with your people.

Hope this information is useful.

John Peters, M.D.

Contributing Editor,

Paramedic Operations, SOF

TELL-TALE RUNNING BOARD ...

Sirs;

"Aaron Bank Saga" (June, '82) was very interesting, but being a fan of French automobiles and having 20 years in military intelligence, I look for small details.

If you look at the picture of Bank and the members of the Operation Jedburg team on page 26 standing by their "requisitioned" Citroen, I believe you will find it is probably a 1936 Ford Watford and not a Citroen. Citroen established their famous front-wheel drive vehicles in 1935-1936 and made the same model until 1955-1956, none of which had running boards.

I enjoy your magazine.

Sincerely,
James P. Bandy
Karlsruhe, Germany ☺



Continued from page 16

looting. Over the next few nights, the Tanzanians looted shops in the capital of Victoria.

Ultimately they returned to Dar es Salaam in the unmarked, camouflaged transport planes in which they had arrived.

TERRORIST COOPERATION . . .

The face of terrorism has reared its ugly head many times in the past, but more recent incidents are lending evidence to an alarming new trend: cooperation between terrorist groups.

According to conservative newsletter *H. du B. Reports*, out of St. George, Utah, the man who shot Pope John Paul II was on loan to an organization called "The Heroes" from another terror group. The Heroes first surfaced in early 1982 when authorities discovered that Libya and Syria were handling their recruitment, looking for unknowns with Western appearance. Recruit training in East Germany is rigorous, and fine-tuned organization is a frightening reality. Their objectives are heads of state, such as President Reagan and the Pope, whose termination would help the Heroes' goal of Western destabilization. Heroes are credited with the attack on Mr. Schlomo Argov, Israeli Ambassador in London, in early June. Soviet officers exercise overall command of the Heroes, providing hitmen with "permanent objectives," and alternative objectives for each operation.

In France, another organization has taken shape. Out of smaller terror groups operating during the '70s such as the "International Revolutionary Action Groups" and the "Armed Core for Popular Autonomy," a new group was formed in 1979 called "Direct Action." In their first two years of terrorist activities, Direct Action netted over one hundred million francs in attacks on banks and private individuals. The mentality of the new terrorism refers to bank robberies as "proletarian recuperation" — armed repossession of money taken from the workers.

Direct Action terrorists with backgrounds in management training have set up a line of supply, transport and communications — a veritable "underground railroad" — from Paris, spreading through Europe, with ties in Beirut. Paris police have already un-

covered over 40 hideouts stocked with fake passports, weapons, etc.


The 29 May 1982 attack on the Bank of America in Paris was carried out by Direct Action members, and may have had unsuspected Heroes backing them up. This action distracted news media from Reagan's trip to the summit conference at Versailles. Such cooperation, unfortunately, is becoming commonplace.

Anyone on terror group hit lists is a marked man. Western Jews, Americans, Israelis, NATO personnel and

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dissidents from Syria, Libya and Iran are fair game.

New tactics are coming of age to combat this type of cooperation. A good example is the anti-terrorist branch of Scotland Yard, called C-13, operating internationally. Their methods are geared toward uncovering terror command centers stationed across Europe.

The old excuse of "class struggle" has become obsolete: The new enemy is American imperialism. Today, the terrorist finds the root of all problems leading to America. Whether America has anything to do with their complaints is neither here nor there. Universities allow the teaching of militant Marxist doctrine, and a subversive assembly line is the result. Western nations will be hard put to find soldiers to help fight the terror war.

SOF also reports on Afghanistan's ongoing war in this issue: See Mark Warman's article on mujahideen ops in Kabul on p. 28 and our report of SOF's fire fight with Russian forces on p. 46.

UN PROMOTES TERRORISM ...

To think that an organization such as the United Nations can ever contribute to world peace is a utopian idea at best. If the UN cannot act on behalf of peace, it unfortunately *can* and *does* act on behalf of violence and terror — and American taxpayers are paying part of the bill.

A Heritage Foundation study points out that the UN "is actively supporting Soviet-backed guerrilla movements worldwide — with official UN documents showing that since 1975 at least \$116 million has been spent or budgeted for what the UN calls 'national liberation movements.' About 25 percent of this has come from the pockets of American taxpayers ..."

The U.S. government is not doing anything about this; rather, it is continuing a "business as usual" approach at the UN.

"Liberation movements" receiving UN support for terrorism include the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan African Congress (PAC), all of which are communist-dominated terrorist groups. The UN officially endorses violent "armed struggle" by the PLO, SWAPO, ANC and PAC against UN member states — including tacit approval of terrorist attacks on civilians.

MEDIA IN U.S. MAY BE LEFTIST WEAPON ...

An El Salvadoran guerrilla leader, Reuben Zamora, has been quoted in the *New York Times* as saying that the Marxist rebels are concentrating on the American news media, since it was "the American media, particularly television, that turned public opinion against the Vietnam War."

One of Zamora's colleagues, Hector Oquelli, told *Times* reporter Phillip Taubman, "We have to win the war inside the United States." Taubman's article described a sophisticated campaign which has been launched to achieve that objective. It involves obtaining the cooperation of U.S. newspapers, magazines, radio and TV. ☒

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**FRENCH FORCES
 BUILD UP IN AFRICA ...**

France is continuing its military buildup in Central Africa since the Libyan intervention in Chad. The French are stationing additional troops in the Central African Republic, Gabon, the Ivory Coast and Senegal. Troops have also been offered to Niger and Cameroon, which are considering accepting them.

The Organization of African Unity has rejected a proposed merger between Libya and Chad. Meanwhile, Sudan has built up its forces along the border and Egypt continues to assist the Chadian opposition.

**AFGHANS
 GAINING GROUND ...**

Extensive fighting continues in Afghanistan between Afghan freedom fighters and troops of the pro-communist Afghan government along with Soviet occupation troops.

A new law extending terms of conscription in the regular Afghan army has produced a couple of abortive mutinies, and Afghan soldiers continue to desert and slip over to the anti-communist Afghan insurgents, who have claimed a major victory in their stronghold in the Panchir Valley against the Soviets and Afghan regulars. The rebels claim they killed about 700 of the enemy in engagements north of the capital of Kabul. The insurgents also claim they shot down 21 MiG fighter-bombers and helicopter gunships.

Reports reaching Peshawar, Pakistan, say some 3,000 of the occupying troops have pulled out of the valley to secure bases nearer Kabul.

Meanwhile, several government officials and members of the pro-communist Afghan government have been slain by the insurgents, according to Western diplomats.

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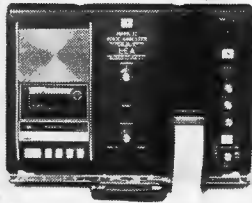
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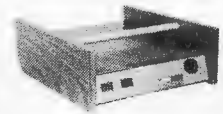
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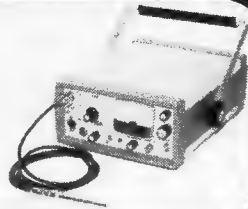


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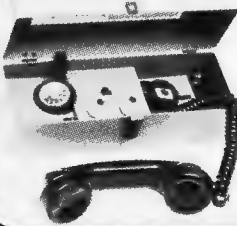
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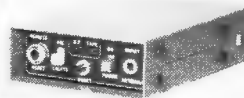
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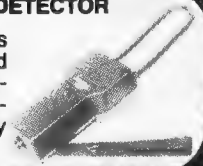
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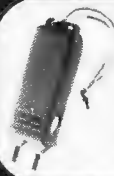
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